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Correspondence Between

THOMAS JEFFERSON

AND

PIERRE SAMUEL DU PONT DE NEMOURS

1798–1817

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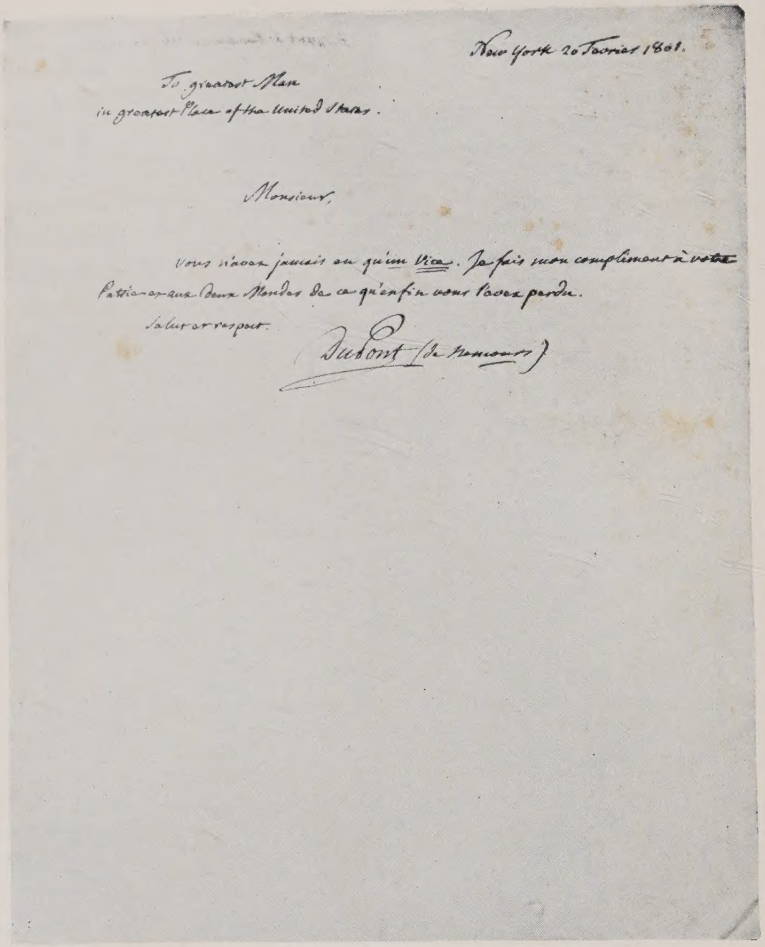
New York 20 Janvier 1801.

To greatest Man
in greatest Place of the United States.

Monsieur,

Vous n'avez jamais eu qu'un Vice. Je fais mon compliment à votre Patrie et aux deux Mondes de ce qu'enfin vous l'avez perdu.

Salut et respect.

Dupont (de Nemours)

DU PONT CONGRATULATES JEFFERSON
UPON HIS ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENCY

The letter reads: «Vous n'avez jamais eu qu'un Vice. Je fais mon compliment à Votre Patrie et aux deux Mondes de ce qu'enfin vous l'avez perdu.» (*See page* 30.)

Correspondence between
THOMAS JEFFERSON
AND
PIERRE SAMUEL DU PONT DE NEMOURS
1798–1817

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B.
J. 356d

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"I need to be free, I need to be useful, I need to live with men of lofty feelings."

—Du Pont to Jefferson
September 8, 1805

4108

PREFACE

THE sixty letters published in this volume constitute the major part of the correspondence between Jefferson and Du Pont de Nemours during the years of the latter's intimate association with the United States. Except for one letter from the Coolidge Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, all have been taken from the Jefferson Papers in the Library of Congress. Du Pont's letters, almost twice as numerous as those from Jefferson, are originals which their recipient preserved. So far as the editor knows, none of these has previously appeared in print. Written in French, in an extraordinarily difficult hand, they have been translated at the cost of no little eye-strain, which the editor has shared sufficiently to appreciate. If some of the passages seem to lack clarity, the fault may be attributed to the illegibility of the originals or to the occasional confusion of an old man's thought. Jefferson's letters, always in English, are in the form of press copies or of duplicates made by his ingenious polygraph. A number of those published here have already been printed in one place or another, but rarely, we believe, in such truly Jeffersonian form. We have followed the manuscripts as closely as modern usage will permit. Capitals have been placed at the beginning of sentences, some

slight changes have been made in punctuation for purposes of clarity, and paragraphs have been indicated where they seemed intended, but in almost no other case has there been any modification of eccentricity or caprice. The Sage of Monticello had a *penchant* for abbreviations, made no point of literary consistency, and was distinctly an individualist in his spelling.

The editor's introduction which precedes the correspondence outlines the relations between these two eminent men, without pretense of biographical completeness. Notes might have been multiplied indefinitely, but those which accompany the text will be sufficient, I trust, to explain most references which might cause difficulty to the general reader. We have omitted some long, technical letters, and certain obscure and repetitious paragraphs. A more complete edition of the correspondence, with the letters of Du Pont in the original, such as was announced by Professor Gilbert Chinard of Johns Hopkins University as this manuscript was going to press, would be a genuine contribution to scholarship.

The original suggestion that this correspondence be published emanated from President Edwin A. Alderman of the University of Virginia, and the work has proceeded under his constant encouragement, invaluable aid, and wise counsel. As he himself has stated it, he has "long been impressed by the spectacle of these

two modern-minded practical idealists, acquainted with disaster and revolution and the breaking up of society, seeking in a new world to lay the framework of a just and happy State. Since the principles of Jefferson have helped to mould the new nation's life and the descendants of Du Pont have attained the distinction of high public service which he hoped for them, the whole connection is one of supreme interest and romance."

The Richmond Alumni of the University of Virginia by their grant enabled the editor to devote to this task time which ordinarily would have been required for academic duties. The generous coöperation of Pierre Samuel du Pont, Esquire, of Wilmington, and of Frederic William Scott, Esquire, of Richmond, made possible the collection, translation, and publication of the letters. For friendly assistance, the editor is chiefly indebted, in addition, to the staff of the Library of Congress, especially of the Division of Manuscripts, to Mr. Julius H. Tuttle, Librarian of the Massachusetts Historical Society, to Mr. Harry Clemons, Librarian of the University of Virginia, to Professor Wilson Gee, Director, and Miss Helen Harrell, Secretary, of the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, University of Virginia, and, last but by no means least, to Professor Linwood Lehman, who did the work of translation under difficulties of which the editor is at least partially aware.

D. M.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION xiii

CORRESPONDENCE

I. THE COMING OF DU PONT TO AMERICA, 1798–1800 1

II. NATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1800 8

III. AFFAIRS OF STATE, 1800–1802 27

IV. THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE, 1802–1803 46

V. PHILOSOPHER AND PRESIDENT, 1804–1809 80

VI. PARIS AND MONTICELLO, 1809–1815 124

VII. DU PONT'S LAST VISIT TO AMERICA, 1815–1817 154

INDEX 197

INTRODUCTION

THOMAS JEFFERSON made the acquaintance of Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours while Minister to the Court of Louis XVI on the eve of the French Revolution. The ripe friendship between these two notable liberals ended only with the death of the elder in 1817. Born in Paris, December 14, 1739, less than four years before Jefferson first saw the light of day in the Piedmont of Virginia, Du Pont had attained eminence as an economist before his future friend had written the Declaration of Independence.[1] He had little more than attained his majority when he began to wield his pen against the ascendant philosophy of mercantilism, with its elaborate system of rules and restrictions, and in behalf of the doctrines of the physiocrats, who glorified agriculture and advocated freedom of commerce. Like Jefferson, he rooted his faith in the soil and sought the regeneration of mankind through the removal of artificial economic and intellectual barriers. So tireless a foe of privilege and restriction met inevitable repression in pre-revolutionary France. Expelled from the editorship of the *Journal d'agriculture, du commerce et des*

[1] The best sketch of the life of Du Pont is Eugène Daire, "Notice sur la vie et les travaux de Dupont de Nemours," in the volume, *Physiocrates* (Paris, 1846), I, 309–34. A valuable bibliographical note is on pp. 333–34.

finances in 1766, he soon assumed the editorship of the *Éphémérides du citoyen*, which was suppressed in 1772. Then called to the Court of Poland, he there became secretary of the Council of Public Instruction, but hastened back to France when his friend Turgot became Comptroller-General in 1774.

During Turgot's all too brief tenure of office, Du Pont, sharing his hopes and labors, became his veritable *alter-ego*.[1] The fall of the financier (May 12, 1776) forced the exile of his devoted colleague, who betook himself to the country and there translated poetry and wrote two volumes of *Mémoires* on the life and works of the statesman he adored.[2] After the death of Maurepas, however, Du Pont was recalled by Vergennes and entrusted with two important missions. He negotiated, with the secret envoy of Great Britain, the bases of the treaty which recognized the independence of the United States in 1782; and he drew up the conditions of the treaty of commerce signed by Great Britain and France four years later. He served also under Calonne, and became at length a Councillor of State. As director of commerce, he greatly aided Jefferson in the latter's efforts to gain commercial privileges for the struggling young American republic, and impressed that minister as the ablest man in France. There is, however, only

[1] *Physiocrates* (Paris, 1846), 1, 318

[2] *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de Turgot* (1782).

scant record of correspondence between them before Du Pont, endangered by political developments in his native land near the end of the century, turned toward the United States, where Jefferson was then in office as Vice-President, though not in political power.

Du Pont was imperiled before this. Elected by the third estate of Nemours to the Estates General, he showed himself distinctly a moderate as the Revolution developed. He opposed the creation of the *assignats* and hoped for the establishment of liberty by and with the monarchy. On August 10, 1792, he offered himself and his son in arms to protect the King and counseled the distracted monarch to defend himself. Soon proscribed, he escaped detection until the Reign of Terror neared its end. Then thrown into prison, he was saved only by the fall of Robespierre. The following year he was elected to the Council of the Elders. Strongly opposed to the Directory, he established a paper, *L'Historien*, as the medium of his opinions. After the *coup d'état* of 18th Fructidor (September 4, 1797), his printery was pillaged and he himself narrowly escaped deportation.

Such were the circumstances which caused Du Pont to turn his eyes hopefully to America. Though the government of the young republic across the Atlantic was then in the hands of a group bitterly hostile to subversive French influences, with which even so

moderate a reformer as Du Pont may have been identified by the extremists, he thought that here liberty was fixed in the habits of the nation. From the Federalists he doubtless expected fair treatment; from his old associate Jefferson he rightly anticipated a warm welcome. Combined with his desire to escape political embarrassment was the ambition to repair his personal fortunes in a land of vast economic promise. As early as 1797, he had outlined a grandiose plan for an agricultural and commercial establishment in the United States, which he was to direct and in which he was investing the greater part of the fortune remaining to him.[1] The chief purpose of the company, for which he optimistically solicited subscriptions, was to buy and sell lands, preferably in western Virginia, and to organize commercial and industrial establishments there. He was certain that within ten years the invested capital would be quadrupled, and hopeful that it might be increased ten or twentyfold. Soon impelled to subordinate the element of land speculation, he announced only the purpose of doing a shipping business on commission.[2] Subscriptions were fewer than he had anticipated, but in the autumn of 1799, feeling that he could wait no longer, he collected his family and set sail.

[1] Bessie G. du Pont, *Life of E. I. du Pont* (1923–26), IV, 86–100.
[2] *Ibid.*, V, 99–109.

Though exigencies of finance were chiefly responsible for this delay, diplomatic complications may have played some part. Du Pont had originally coupled his project with a scientific mission from the *Institut de France* and had sought passports from Great Britain and the United States in this connection.[1] Diplomatic relations between the latter country and France were then broken, and the projected expedition was viewed with distinct disfavor by President Adams, who felt that the United States had had too many French philosophers already.[2] By the autumn of 1799, however, Adams was endeavoring to restore amicable relations with France and seems to have imposed no objection to the coming of Du Pont, whose motives were now ostensibly commercial.

Pierre Samuel, accompanied by a round dozen of descendants and relatives, sailed for America about October 1, 1799.[3] His second wife and her son-in-law, Bureaux de Pusy, erstwhile companion of Lafayette, had preceded him and bought a house near New York. In the main party were Du Pont's sons, Victor and Eleuthère Irénée, and their families, Madame du Pont's brother and her daughter, Madame de Pusy, with her baby. After ninety-three days at sea, they landed at

[1] *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King* (1895), II, 367–68.

[2] *Works of John Adams* (1853), VIII, 596.

[3] Bessie G. du Pont, *Life of E. I. du Pont*, V, 115–16; *E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., A History* (1920), pp. 6–7.

Newport, Rhode Island, the first day of 1800 and soon repaired to the recently purchased house near New York. This Du Pont named "Good Stay."

Here he received a letter from Jefferson urging caution in the investment of his funds. This counsel, reënforced by personal conference in Philadelphia, caused him to refrain from all purchase of lands and to establish merely a commercial house in New York, Du Pont de Nemours, fils et cie.[1] Subsequently, in order to facilitate the naturalization of his son Victor and take advantage of the commercial opportunities which were expected to center in Alexandria, Virginia, he purchased a house there. Du Pont de Nemours remained in the United States, where the difficulties of a foreign tongue greatly embarrassed him, only until the summer of 1802, when he returned to Paris to rearrange the affairs of his company. His son Victor continued in commerce in New York, while Irénée soon set up a powder factory near Wilmington, Delaware. The original company backed the two subsidiaries, but Du Pont, in order to protect the subscribers, separated it from them both.[2] The controlling firm was located in Paris until its failure in 1811.[3] Victor du Pont's firm had failed in 1805, but the younger brother, increasingly successful as a manufacturer of powder, bolstered

[1] *Life of E. I. du Pont*, v, 117–21.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi, 24; viii, 40–66. [3] *Ibid.*, viii, 296 ff.

the family fortunes. Du Pont *père* remained in Paris until 1815, when, again induced by political dangers, he yielded to the entreaties of his sons and returned to America, where he died two years later. His two periods of residence in the United States comprised less than five years. His correspondence with his most cherished American friend, however, continued from 1798 to 1817 with only slight interruption.

At first, naturally, they discussed Du Pont's coming to America. Then they turned to the topic which also dominated their final letters. In effect, their correspondence began and ended with a discussion of education. The Vice-President, hoping that a university would one day be established in his native State, asked his learned friend for an outline of subjects which might be taught in such an institution. He did not anticipate the treatise which issued from the tireless pen of the French philosopher, nor entirely approve of the scheme of education, centering in a *national* university, which Du Pont elaborated and later published under the title, *Sur l'éducation nationale dans les États-Unis d'Amérique*. Indeed, he was somewhat embarrassed by the assiduity of his counselor and gave him no great encouragement in his persistent desire to have the work translated into English. Their correspondence, though rather one-sided, was marked by high mutual appreciation. During this twelvemonth,

so fateful in Jefferson's political history, he procured the election of Du Pont to the American Philosophical Society, and the latter followed with constant concern the course of the campaign which eventuated in the election of his friend to the Presidency. The false report of Jefferson's death, referred to in several letters and by which Du Pont was so deeply moved, has been overlooked by practically all the writers on this tempestuous period.

Jefferson's accession to the Presidency provided the occasion for Du Pont to congratulate him enthusiastically, to discuss political problems with him, to seek his good offices for the powder factory, and, at length, to serve unofficially in connection with the negotiations which resulted in the purchase of Louisiana. His comments on domestic politics, often obscure and based on imperfect information, are significant chiefly in the confidence in Jefferson they disclose and the replies they elicited from the President. His references to the election of Jefferson to the *Institut de France* recall French recognition of the Virginian as the outstanding American intellectual. From the political point of view, the letters in regard to the Louisiana negotiations are perhaps the most important in the entire collection. Du Pont's return to France in June, 1802, was chiefly due to considerations of business, but on personal and philosophical, as well as commercial, grounds he

strongly desired the preservation of peace between the United States and France. He would probably have returned to Paris in any case, but the opportunity to serve as courier, bearing important dispatches to the American Minister, to share the counsels of the President, and to contribute to a settlement of the vexing question created by the retrocession of Louisiana to France by Spain, may have constituted an additional inducement. It is difficult to determine how much he contributed to a settlement into which Napoleonic caprice so largely entered. Monroe thought that on the whole he had been helpful. His lengthy letters to Jefferson probably served to stimulate and clarify the latter's mind. Certainly they elicited replies which will always be cited in connection with the major accomplishments of his administration.

Literary tasks combined with business to keep Du Pont in France throughout the rest of Jefferson's Presidency and six years beyond. His labor of love in editing Turgot's works, which he published in nine volumes, 1808–11, reconciled him to separation from his sons and provided a constant excuse for his failure to return to America. His letters to his friend the President abounded in comments on American and international affairs, but centered in no single, vital question. He informed Jefferson of the medal awarded the latter by a French agricultural society for his improvements of

the plough, urged in ways both sensible and fantastic the organization of defense in the United States, discussed possibilities in the matter of the Floridas, and persistently urged Jefferson to stand for a third term. The latter's replies, relatively few in number, were generally limited to questions raised by his correspondent. The most interesting of them all, written two days before his retirement, has been printed before and often quoted. Nowhere else did Jefferson describe more strikingly his relief at escaping from the shackles of office, and his joy in retiring to family, farm, books, and the "tranquil pursuits of science," which were his supreme delight.

Between the withdrawal of Jefferson to his beloved mountain sanctuary in 1809 and the final visit of Du Pont to his children, the two men engaged in relatively disinterested discussion of problems of finance and government. The retired statesman outlined the development of American manufactures during the period of commercial restriction and predicted that the earlier condition of dependence upon Great Britain would never be restored. The economist responded with an elaborate discussion, only partially reproduced here, of the changes in the American system of taxation which he felt should follow the decline of income from imports. His rather abstract observations were duly passed on with mild approbation to the statesmen then

in power, Madison and Gallatin, who probably pigeonholed them. Subsequent letters from Du Pont during these years were even more theoretical. The intellectual garrulity of his old age was rather tedious. During this period his mind made no vital contact with that of his American friend.

Du Pont's return to the United States, following his participation in the abortive first restoration of the Bourbons and the disquieting return of the loathed Corsican from Elba, restored realism to his correspondence with Jefferson, but failed to bring that personal contact which both men had so eagerly anticipated. From the vantage-point of his son's successful establishment, he congratulated himself upon freedom from political entanglements, discussed with optimism the future of the Latin-American republics, and even predicted the ultimate dismissal of kings by despot-ridden Europe. Jefferson despaired of France, but felt that if Du Pont would come with Corréa da Serra, the naturalist, to Monticello, the three of them could settle the affairs of both hemispheres. To the mountain-top the Frenchman and Portuguese in time repaired, but found to their consternation that the Sage, by some extraordinary misunderstanding, was miles away at Poplar Forest, his estate in Bedford County, superintending building operations. After enjoying for three days the hospitality of Jefferson's daughter, Martha

Randolph, and the chatter of a tiny granddaughter, the disappointed French veteran departed, leaving certain of his works behind. The master, on his belated return, described his mortification with characteristic literary felicity and expressed profound regret that he had missed so rich a feast. The failure of the veterans to meet, after all these years of correspondence, had in it elements both touching and ludicrous. Perhaps neither of them was free from absent-mindedness. This lost opportunity proved the last they ever had to come together. Their correspondence, however, was uninterrupted and was marked by expressions of mutual esteem approaching tenderness.

In one of his last letters, Jefferson, discussing Du Pont's proposed constitution for certain of the Latin-American republics, set forth in some detail the differences between his own mature political philosophy and that of his revered friend. Both loved the people, but to the Frenchman they were yet children who might not be trusted without nurses; to the Virginian they were adults whom he would leave freely to self-government. Jefferson felt, however, that Du Pont had proposed for the Colombians as good a government as they could bear, and he gave, for the first time, his own approval of a literacy test for citizenship. It was here that he said, "Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish

like evil spirits at the dawn of day." Du Pont, again remarking that Jefferson had made a great mistake in not having his work on education translated years before, likewise swore eternal fidelity to the cult of enlightenment. "As yet," he said, "we can sow only acorns on land rather badly prepared. Oaks will grow under which, some centuries after us, men and animals will walk and propagate in safety, abundance, and delight." The last letters which passed between these two lifelong apostles of human betterment returned to the topic with which their extensive correspondence began. Differ in details though they might, both clung to the pre-revolutionary faith and continued to believe that mankind, if not perfectible, was susceptible of infinite improvement.

The death of Du Pont at Eleutherian Mills, August 6, 1817, was reported to Jefferson by the newspapers and a letter from the son of his old friend. Jefferson's reply to the latter concludes this volume. Though highly appreciative, it is markedly restrained. Du Pont, ever more effusive, had been the larger contributor to their friendship of more than thirty years. But it was an association between equals and devotees of the same political faith. Both labored amid vast disillusionment for the public good.

Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours

I

THE COMING OF DU PONT TO AMERICA 1798–1800

PARIS, 10 *Fructidor of the year* 6
[*August* 27, 1798.]

Du Pont (de Nemours) to Thomas Jefferson
President of the Senate of the United States

SIR,

Dr. Logan [1] will tell you that he has found in France good and zealous friends of America; and you will not be surprised that I, as well as my son, was included among that number. During your embassy you saw me struggle on behalf of your country, and for principles of liberality, of sincere friendship between the two nations, and against every financial and commercial prejudice which our government had at that time.[2]

[1] Dr. George Logan, of Philadelphia, whose self-imposed mission to France in 1798 aroused the ire of the Federalists and resulted in an act of Congress which forbade further unauthorized missions. Jefferson wrote his son-in-law, Thomas Mann Randolph, January 17, 1799: "Dr. Logan tells me Dupont de Nemours is coming over, and decided to settle in our neighborhood. I always considered him as the ablest man in France." See *Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections*, 7 Ser., 1 (1900), 65.

[2] See P. L. Ford, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (1892–99), IV, 462–63.

You saw my joy when our efforts were not vain.

This feeling of deep interest for your country cannot be lessened in me. I am commissioned by the National Institute [1] to make a trip there, which has for its aim a report on my researches which may be of use to science; and it is my intention to prolong this trip to the end of my life.

I wish to die in a country in which liberty does not exist only in the laws, always more or less well, more or less badly, carried out; but chiefly in the fixed habits of the nation.

I count on settling in upper Virginia or the western counties.

I trust I shall again find there your lasting friendship and the aid of your wisdom and knowledge.

I am sending you such of my speeches as the *Council of the Elders* [2] has ordered printed and my *philosophy* [3] which, I hope, will not be out of harmony with yours.

Best wishes and affectionate regards.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

[1] The Institut de France, established by the law of 1795. Du Pont was one of the original members. See Comte de Franqueville, *Le Premier Siècle de l'Institut de France* (1895–96).

[2] The upper chamber of the legislature established by the Constitution of 1795. Du Pont served in this body until September, 1797, was for a time one of the secretaries, and from July 22 to August 18, 1797, was its president (*Moniteur Universel* for dates cited). His resignation, ostensibly on the ground of poor health (*ibid.*, September 20, 1797), was due rather to the *coup d'état* of 18th Fructidor (September 4, 1797). See Bessie G. du Pont, *E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.* (1920), p. 3.

[3] Presumably his *Philosophie de l'Univers* (1796).

[*January* 17, 1800]

M. Dupont the elder

SIR,

I have just heard, my dear friend, of your arrival,[1] and I hasten to welcome you to our shores, where you will at least be free from some of those sources of inquietude which have surrounded you in Europe. I feel much for what you must have suffered in a voyage of 95. days at this inclement season: but I shall hope to hear that these sufferings have passed away without lasting effects. I should certainly have hastened to New York to see you, and to offer you all the services I can render you, but that I am confined by my office to be in the chair of the Senate daily.[2] Your son is so well acquainted with our country, and M. Bureau-Pusy I presume in some degree so, that I hope they will be able to take care of you.[3] I much regret that you do not speak our language with ease, as I know from experience how much that lessens the pleasures of society. Until I hear from you what are your plans & purposes,

[1] He had landed at Newport, Rhode Island, January 1, 1800. See Introduction.

[2] Jefferson was then Vice-President. Philadelphia was still the seat of the government.

[3] Victor Marie du Pont (1767–1827) came to the United States in 1787 as attaché of the French legation. In 1798 he was appointed consul general of France at New York, but was refused an *exequatur* by President Adams. Returning to France, he emigrated with his father. See article by Broadus Mitchell in *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. v (in press). Bureaux de Pusy, son-in-law of the second wife of Du Pont, with her had preceded the rest of the family group to America.

I know not in what way I can be useful to you; I wish I could have a personal explanation of them; but in the mean time I pray you to command any offices I can render you. The present agonizing state of commerce, and the swarms of speculators in money and in land, would induce me to beseech you to trust no-body, in whatever form they may approach you till you are fully informed; [1] but your son, I am sure, is able to guard you from those who in this as in every other country consider the stranger as lawful prey, & watch & surround him on his first arrival. I am in hopes you bring us some account of La Fayette. Health and happiness to you & the most affectionate salutations.

TH: JEFFERSON

GOOD-STAY, BERGEN-POINT
NEAR NEW YORK, *January* 20, 1800

To Mr. Jefferson

SIR,

Here I am in your country; and the first thing I find is a mark of your kindness to me, in the hands of my friend Pusy.

I am deeply touched at your remembrance.

I admit that our former relations and the devotion to America, which you saw in me when I was Privy Councillor for the King of France and charged with

[1] Jefferson's advice was one of the reasons why Du Pont delayed, and ultimately abandoned, his plan to speculate in lands. See B. G. du Pont, *Life of E. I. du Pont*, VIII, 41.

the administration of commerce for my country, had caused me to hope to find some kindness at your hands in return for the affection which you had inspired in me. But it is all the more pleasant to me to see that I had not presumed too much on your kindly disposition.

I shall go in about a fortnight to Philadelphia to thank you; [1] and then I shall return to the temporary shelter in which I live to await a better knowledge of your language and a better knowledge of the sort of establishment which I can form.

The ideas which I conceived in Europe aim at bringing me nearer to you by fixing the center of my work in upper Virginia. But I cannot fix upon any plan before I am better informed.

But what permits of no doubt is my sincere friendship for you.

DU PONT DE NEMOURS

As I was folding my letter, I received yours undated.

How kind you are!

How touched I am by it!

And how disposed I am to take advantage of your offer of aid, as much as I can without bothering you too much!

[1] This he did within a few weeks and promised to visit Jefferson in the summer at Monticello with Madame Du Pont. See *Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections*, 7 Ser., 1, 74.

I already knew that here one must be extremely reserved, especially when one wishes honorably to look after another's interests: for, if you ruin yourself, you would be only imprudent (which is always a fault) and unfortunate (which is the just punishment for imprudence); but in impairing the fortune of your friends, of those who have confidence in you, you would be deserving of censure.

I have arrived at my sixtieth year, and I have passed through many crises in government, business, and revolutions without thus far being exposed to any reproach. It is a source of happiness for which I most gratefully thank divine Providence. Judge whether I should be willing to risk losing that happiness today.

I will give you the details of my position, my desires, my duties, my means. Your wisdom, your experience, your knowledge of the country and of the inhabitants, of people and things, will guide my actions. I have one great advantage; that is, we are four men, Pusy, my two sons,[1] and I, and we are not without intelligence and kindness, and we each have by a miracle almost unique a wife full of common sense, courage, and the desire to do the proper thing. Such a *quaternion*, four households so perfectly matched, eight people of such

[1] Victor Marie and Eleuthère Irénée (1771–1834), who later established the noted powder works near Wilmington, Delaware. See note on Du Pont's letter of December 17, 1800, below.

ability and virtues, so intimately bound together, is a thing that I have never seen but this one time.

And we have you to preserve us from errors!

God in everything be praised!

I left our dear La Fayette eight months ago in Holland. I saw his wife and son almost every day until I left Paris on the twelfth of September of last year. The English invasion forced him to leave the Batavian Republic and return to Hamburg. The strained relations which exist between France and the citizens of Hamburg very likely have caused him to leave their city again; and I think he is at present in Holstein or has returned to Holland. He cannot and will not come to America until his wife succeeds in converting her own personal fortune into ready money (for La Fayette's is lost), so as to be assured of some sort of independence.

II

NATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

1800

PHILADELPHIA *Apr.* 12, 1800

M. Dupont de Nemours

MY DEAR SIR

You have a mind, active, highly informed, and benevolent. I avail myself of all these qualities in addressing to you the following request. I mentioned to you when you were here, that we had in contemplation in Virginia to establish an university or college on a reformed plan; omitting those branches of science no longer useful or valued, tho hitherto kept up in all colleges, and introducing the others adapted to the real uses of life and the present state of things: and that I had written to Doctr. Priestley to engage him to propose to us a plan.[1] This he will do. But I wish to have your aid in this business also. I do not mean to trouble you with writing a treatise; but only to state what are the branches of science which in the present state of man, and particularly with us, should be introduced into an academy, and to class them together in such

[1] January 18, 1800. See *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Memorial ed., 1903–04), x, 140–43.

groupes, as you think might be managed by one professor devoting his whole time to it. It is very interesting to us to reduce the important sciences to as few professorships as possible because of the narrowness of our resources. Therefore I should exclude those branches which can usually be learned with us in private schools, as Greek, Latin, common arithmetic, music, fencing, dancing, &c. I should also exclude those which are unimportant, as the Oriental languages &c. and those which may be acquired by reading alone, without the help of a master, such as Ethics, &c. A short note on each science, such as you might give without too much trouble would be thankfully received. Possessing yours & Dr. Priestley's ideas, we should form a little committee at home, and accommodate them to the state of our country, and dispositions of our fellow citizens, better known to us than to you. Our object would be, after settling the maximum of the effort to which we think our fellow citizens could be excited, to select the most valuable objects to which it could be directed.[1] [Illegible Latin quotation.] Accept my salutations and assurances of sincere respect & esteem & my hopes that your apostleship from the national institute will lead you towards Monticello,

[1] Jefferson was unable to give any serious attention to projects of higher education until after his retirement from politics in 1809. The discussions during these earlier years were essentially theoretical. See P. A. Bruce, *History of the University of Virginia* (1920), I, 63–65, 72.

where we shall be made very happy possessing Md^e. Dupont & yourself.

Affectionately, Adieu.[1]

GOOD-STAY, *April* 21, 1800

To Mr. Jefferson

I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and I shall do as well as I can what you are so kind as to intrust to me.

But it is impossible for me to give it suitable attention until after the departure of the *Parlementaire* which is to carry my business correspondence to Europe. For I am forced to be a shrewd merchant and a good business director, since God has made me poor, and since, no longer engaging in public matters, I can hope to be useful again to the human race and to attain to some great and honorable work only with another's capital, and necessarily on the condition that I increase it. I must earn by the sweat of my brow and for the profit of my associates the right, the freedom, the power of having them share (without their thinking about the matter) in institutions which are advantageous to man and which God can regard with kindness.

As to national education, the greatest of national affairs, you have perfectly perceived and shown in your *Notes on Virginia*,[2] which contain excellent views on this

[1] Taken from a press copy without signature.

[2] This noted work of Jefferson's, which went through many editions, may be seen conveniently in his *Writings* (Ford ed.), III, 68–295.

matter, that colleges and universities are not the most fundamental things to attain it.

All instruction really of use in our daily life, all practical sciences, all physical activity, all good sense, all upright notions, all morality, all virtue, all courage, all prosperity, all the happiness of a nation, and especially of a republic, must begin with primary and elementary schools.

Boarding schools, colleges, universities, learned and philosophical societies can and must serve only in the development of a small number of outstanding natures, which have only two actual uses themselves: first, the advancement of the sciences; second, the application of their results to the arts, which find a suitable place in common instruction and in those courses taught without effort in the elementary schools.

But it is for the last that it is extremely difficult to work. We ourselves are very commonplace: man is a poor creature. We have learned with trouble enough what sort of conversation is carried on with those who have some intelligence, those whom higher education has improved. We know not the language of the multitude which is stupid and heedless; we know not how to penetrate those minds which have but little energy and aptitude; more still, we know not what would be the way to influence the intelligence of children to listen to ours. We were children so long ago

that we have forgotten it; and young men in their pride and passions have no thoughts sufficiently lofty to remember with a profound enough philosophy that beautiful and interesting period in their lives: besides they are occupied with ambition and with pleasures, much work with small glory, and not their real business.

So we must go back to our own childhood, seek carefully in our own memory how and why we understood, and in what way our natures were formed, so as not to estrange this young generation [cette jeunesse] which succeeds us, so as to make it understand and desire, to render it as enlightened and as happy as our average natures permit.

This average can be raised, not above what great men have been, but above the ordinary scholars of Germany, Italy, England, and France. It can be done. Are we capable of doing it? At least it must be attempted.

It would be the great aim of my ambition, and almost its only aim, since I have experienced that no political institution is lasting except through prejudice, which is the only knowledge of fools or of an almost infinite majority; and how necessary it is then to add to the force of reason itself that of *prejudice*, while troubling childhood only with ideas that are true, sensible, useful, agreeable, pleasant, and naturally associated, and

which can remain on tap, without bother or inconvenience, in the opinion of those who are fit only to repeat and believe and never to be called to account afterwards by those who are worthy of thinking.

It is a pity we are no longer young. But I have seen *Quesnay* at work at eighty-one, *Franklin* at eighty-two, *Voltaire* at eighty-four, *d'Aubenton* at eighty-five — and hard at work too.

Besides, if it be pleasing to the Director to lower the curtain before we have finished playing our parts, he will doubtless have his reasons for it; but there is no reason for us to interrupt ourselves and to play our parts carelessly.

Affectionately and respectfully yours
Du Pont (de Nemours)

Madame Du Pont is grateful for your thoughts of her.

I enclose a small work on the early education of *Countrymen* [1] which I amused myself by writing while they were looking for me to cut my throat. It was the beginning of a book which I haven't had time to finish. I have only this copy; but to whom can I better offer it than to you?

I will have a second pamphlet copied for you, which I did at the Institute on the same subject.

[1] Perhaps his *Vues sur l'éducation nationale par un cultivateur*, published in Paris, An II (1793–94).

GOOD STAY NEAR NEW YORK, *May* 6, 1800

To Mr. Jefferson

SIR,

I am now about to busy myself upon the work with which you charged me. I should like this to be done in a manner worthy of you and the importance of the subject. But I dare not hope for so much.

A plan of education which does not begin with the elementary school is what is called in France "the cart before the horse" [*une charrue devant les boeufs*].

My friend Pusy will deliver this letter to you; he is worthy of all your esteem; and in addition to a great many things in which he excels me, he has the advantage of speaking English pretty well — *à la française:* which is preferable by far to not speaking it at all.

I dare say that you are satisfied with the New York elections.[1] I congratulate America and you.

My respectful and very affectionate greetings.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

PHILADELPHIA *May* 12, 1800

M. Dupont de Nemours

DEAR SIR

I am happy in having seen here M. Bureau Pusy. The relation in which he stands to two persons whom I

[1] In New York, as in most states at this time, presidential electors were chosen by the legislature. The elections for the legislature, held a few days before the date of this letter, were favorable to the Republicans, and because of the strategic importance of the state were regarded as an augury of success in the country as a whole.

so much esteem as yourself and M. de la Fayette,[1] as well as his own merit ensured him my best wishes. He is now on the wing as well as myself. I have therefore only time to inform you that about three weeks ago you were chosen a member of the American Philosophical society by an unanimous vote.[2] The diploma is made out and signed, but the Secretary who has the seal in possession is absent from Philadelphia, so that it cannot be sealed till his return. It will then be forwarded to you by one of the Secretaries. Accept the sincere wishes for your health and happiness of Dear Sir

Your affectionate friend & servt

TH: JEFFERSON

P.S. The piece you put into my hands on the relations between animals & vegetables was read to the society and ordered to be printed in their next volume.[3]

[1] Bureaux de Pusy, captain of engineers, was one of the twenty-two officers who left France with Lafayette, August 19, 1792, after the proscription of the latter by the Assembly. He remained in prison, nearly always in the same German or Austrian fortress as his chief, until September, 1797, and was one of the three "prisoners of Olmütz," who excited so much sympathy in Europe and America. See Étienne Charavay, *Le Général LaFayette* (1898), pp. 329–65. He returned to France in 1801. See Bessie G. du Pont, *Life of E. I. du Pont* (1923–26), VIII, 45.

[2] April 18, 1800.

[3] Presented at the same meeting. For the relations of Du Pont with the Society, see "Early Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society" (*Proceedings*, vol. XXII, 1884), pp. 298–301, 313, 459.

GOOD-STAY NEAR NEW YORK
June 15, 1800

To Mr. Jefferson

SIR,

I have just finished the work you were good enough to ask me for on national education.[1]

Like the original draft, I am quite muddled and I am compelled to have a clear copy made. Work is being done on it now.

Alas! It is a veritable volume.

I do not know whether you will find it worth while.

But it will not be entirely bad. And at least it will be a slight monument of my affection for you and of my zeal for the United States.

Sometimes I was afraid that, since you did not hear from me, you believed I was neglecting the task you had given me.

If a person became frightened at his weakness, he would do nothing. I prefer to take a chance and do what my friends desire and what I believe to be of some use.

Respectfully yours

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

Can a note book of two or three hundred pages be forwarded to you by mail?

Madame Du Pont sends regards. Pusy does likewise, and my children add their good wishes.

[1] See note on his letter of August 24, 1800, below.

GOOD-STAY NEAR NEW YORK, *July* 6, 1800

To Mr. Jefferson

Nothing can equal the grief and consternation I felt when I saw the sad and false piece of news which America's enemies and yours had inserted in the newspapers.[1] I believed I had lost the greatest man on this continent, the one whose clear thinking can be most useful to the two worlds, the one who by his similarity to our principles gives me the hope of the firmest sort of friendship so necessary to one living far from his native land.

I went through several days of indescribable unhappiness.

I congratulate you and the United States, and I myself am thankful, that blundering attempts at slander nearly always prove to be a boomerang.

They will make some mistake or other, M. de Vergennes said. This self-satisfaction which an enemy never lacks is always of more value to us than our own cleverness.

[1] The Baltimore *American*, June 30, 1800, published a report that Jefferson had died at Monticello, June 24, after an illness of forty-eight hours. The information upon which this was based had been brought from Winchester, Virginia, by certain gentlemen who claimed they had gained it from a "respectable resident" of Charlottesville. The report was widely reprinted. The Philadelphia *Gazette*, a Federalist paper, copied it July 2, 1800, but contradicted it the next day. The Philadelphia *Aurora*, a Jeffersonian paper, reprinted it July 3, 1800, asserting that it was circulated "to damp the festivity of the 4th of July, and prevent the author of the Declaration of Independence, from being the universal toast of the approaching auspicious festival."

The work on National Education in America is as yet only half copied.

My friend *Pusy* is kind enough to take the trouble to transcribe it. The copy will be much more correct and often rectified by his wise counsel. But the result is that I have not the right to hurry him.

My sincerest regards to you.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

My wife and children shared my grief and joy.

Monticello *July* 26, 1800

M. Dupont

My dear Sir

I am much indebted to my enemies for proving, by their recitals of my death, that I have friends. The sensibility you are so good as to express on this [subject] is very precious to me. I have never enjoyed better nor more uninterrupted health.

I ought sooner to have acknoleged your favor of June 15. which came to hand in due time as did that of the 6th. instant. Thank you for your assiduities on the subject of education. There is no occasion to incommode yourself or your friend by pressing it; as when recieved it will still be some time before we shall probably find a good occasion of bringing forward the subject. There are labors for which your reward will come when you will be no longer here to enjoy it. [We

have had] what is considered here as a very hot spell of weather. Yesterday was the warmest day we have had this year. The thermometer was at 86. at this place & probably 2. or 3° more in the vicinities.[1] When do you move on to Alexandria? For then I may expect to see you. I have much lamented you did not land here instead of New York. As you were determined to find the first spot you saw good enough to live on, this might in that case have become the object of your choice. We are anxious to hear of our treaty from Paris.[2] When that arrives, I presume, I shall have to meet the Senate at Washington. And perhaps I may meet yourself there: for till then I can hardly flatter myself with your adventuring so far as this place. Then, now, or whenever it best suits you I shall be most happy to recieve you. Present my friendly salutations to Madame Dupont and to all the members of your family, & accept yourself assurances of my sincere & affectionate attachments.

TH: JEFFERSON

[1] Jefferson kept a careful record of the temperature throughout most of his life. During his absences from Monticello, his son-in-law, Thomas Mann Randolph, made the proper entries and sent the readings to him wherever he was.

[2] The American commissioners dispatched by President Adams to arrive at a settlement with the French had arrived in Paris some weeks before the date of this letter, but the convention which restored amicable relations was not signed until September 30, 1800.

GOOD-STAY, NEAR NEW YORK, *July* 26, 1800

To Mr. Jefferson

SIR,

After mourning your death as one of the greatest misfortunes that could happen to America and the world, and my heart added "to me also," I have been worrying today about your health.

About six weeks ago I informed you that my work on National Education in the United States was finished and that Pusy was putting it in order. I wonder if it can be sent to you by mail.

Since then I let you know how the sad news spread by the newspapers had filled me with grief; with what pleasure I learned that it was false; and my opinion that such spiteful stupidity always benefits worth and virtue.

Lastly I informed you of what has been proposed to Pusy; [1] and I asked you to let us have your opinion of the matter.

I believe that you are a planter and that it is now harvest time.[2]

But if you were ill, I would beg you to have me informed. And tell us at the same time whether the manuscript on education can be sent by mail or in

[1] Du Pont's letter of July 17, 1800, which refers to the suggestion that Pusy enter the service of the United States as colonel in the engineering corps, has not been reproduced here.

[2] Jefferson grievously neglected his correspondence during the summer months at Monticello.

what way I can send it to you. It is now copied in a rather compact hand and comprises only about a hundred pages.

As always, my best regards to you.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

MONTICELLO *Aug.* 11, 1800

M. Dupont de Nemours

DEAR SIR

In my letter by the last post I omitted to answer the question proposed in a former & repeated in your letter of July 26. whether your manuscript on education can be forwarded by post? It may; and will come safer through that than any other channel. Accept in advance my grateful thanks for it; and my efforts will not be wanting to avail my country of your ideas. Success rests with the gods.

I had anticipated your question about the height of the thermometer. 86° of Fahrenheit has been the maximum of the season at Monticello, & 88° of course in its vicinities. I rejoice to hear that you will stay chiefly at Alexandria. I shall then consider you within visiting distance. For tho' I suffered myself to consider as possible your meditated visit from N. York, in soberer moments I viewed the undertaking as too great for the object. Be this as it may I shall be happy to see you & to hear from you at all times and places. Pre-

sent my respectful salutations to your family and accept assurances of my great & constant esteem.

TH: JEFFERSON

GOOD-STAY 24 *Auguste* 1800 (*sic*)

Mr. Jefferson

SIR,

I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the eleventh. Here is the book.[1] Would that it were worthier of the subject and of the philosopher who asked me to handle it.

It is treated like a governmental memorandum [mémoire d'administration], for it really is one: not like a work designed for the public.

There is nothing for *the reader*. I did my work only for the statesman.

May he accept my sincerely respectful affection.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

I see in the papers that Truxton (*sic*) is leaving and will do *the impossible in order to have a second fight with the Vengeance*.[2] Whence comes this madness for killing

[1] Published in France under the title, *Sur l'éducation nationale dans les États-Unis d'Amérique*. Only the second edition, 1812, seems now available. From this a translation has been made by Bessie G. du Pont and published, with an introduction, under the title, *National Education in the United States of America* (1923). For a summary of the work, see P. A. Bruce, *History of the University of Virginia*, I, 63–65. Jefferson disapproved of a national university at Washington, which represented the "apex" of Du Pont's whole system.

[2] Captain Thomas Truxtun, commanding the American frigate *Constellation*, engaged *La Vengeance*, a French vessel, off Guadaloupe, February

foreigners and for getting one's fellow countrymen killed, when it is evident that both nations are reconciled or arbitrating?

And it is said that he hastened for fear of getting official news of an armistice.

What vain and unreasonable creatures most men are!

They would be quite otherwise if they had been properly brought up and if morality had become their religion.

My wife sends greetings. My children offer their respects.

If the heat in Virginia is much worse than it is here, I shall find it to be excessive.

I have sent my son to Alexandria to look for a suitable house.[1] It will be there that I shall live most of the time.

We need a house in Alexandria and another in New York.

1, 1800, but lost his intended prize. See *American State Papers*, Naval Affairs (1834), 1, 71–73. Du Pont's resentment was due to Truxtun's apparent anxiety to renew the engagement, months later, though the American commissioners were in France endeavoring to bring to an end the quasi-warfare.

[1] Victor du Pont bought a house and shop in Alexandria in order that he might become naturalized in Virginia, where only the ownership of property was necessary for the attainment of citizenship, and in the hope that the company might share in the commerce which was expected to center in that city.

GOOD-STAY, NEAR NEW YORK, *November* 8, 1800

Mr. Jefferson

SIR,

About the 20th of August I had the honor to send you *by mail*, as you said I might, my work on *National Education in the United States.*

I am beginning to fear that the postal service is no more careful here than it is in Europe; that your name and the size of the package aroused curiosity; and that after satisfying it, some one deemed it best either to keep or burn the contents: were it only because one is perhaps still unskilled in this art of the old world and will not likely be willing to attest to you through the disorder of the envelope and seal that public faith has been violated.

It may be too that you have not had time to read a rather long French manuscript, and that you did not want to write before reading it. I understand quite well that you have more than one piece of business to attend to, and that of education, which can occupy you only during your presidency, is not the most pressing.

Or again it may be that you have entrusted the book to some friend to translate into English, which I count on doing myself this winter if you haven't already had it done.

But let me know whether you have received it.

At last peace is here. Your high officials will have only good to do.

My best regards to you.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

Pusy is at work on reconnaissance and on projects for the fortification of New York harbor.[1] He sends you his regards and my children their respects.

Washington *Dec.* 12, 1800

M. Dupont de Nemours

[Salutation dim]

I know, my dear friend, that you sent me, as long ago as August, the much-desired and much valued piece on education, which I read with great pleasure, and ought to have acknoleged it's receipt. But when I am at home there are so many delicious occupations of the more active kind that it is as difficult to drag me to my writing-table, as to get a horse, broken loose from confinement, to re-enter his stable door. I intended to have brought on the piece and left it with my friend Mr Madison [who is associated] with me in the wish to improve the state of our education. But in the hurry of my departure, I left it at home. You say you propose to get it translated. But I believe it impossible to trans-

[1] See *American State Papers*, Military Affairs (1832), I, 153, and *passim*, for references to the fortification of harbors during this period. We have not discovered the name of Bureaux de Pusy in connection with these engineering projects, but he may have acted in an advisory capacity.

late your writings. It would be easier to translate Homer, which yet has never been done.[1] Several of us tried our hands on the memoir you gave me for the Philosophical society; but after trial, gave it up as desperate and determined to print it in French. At length our [election] seems to have a certain issue. notwithstanding the annihilation of the vote of Pennsylvania.[2] When will your affairs lead you to visit this place? You may probably find here, one friend more than at any preceding period. Salutations of respect & esteem to your good family, & to yourself [illegible] & happiness. Adieu

TH: JEFFERSON

[1] Francis Walker Gilmer of Virginia is said to have translated the work on education some years later, but Du Pont in the last letter he wrote Jefferson bemoaned the fact that no translation had been made. Gilmer's comments on Du Pont's writing can be fully appreciated by the translator and editor of these letters. He said Du Pont "writes the longest letters in French and in the worst hand I ever saw." See W. P. Trent, "English Culture in Virginia," Johns Hopkins University *Studies* in Hist. and Polit. Science, 7 Ser., pp. 228–30. Mr. Trent himself comments on the illegibility of these letters.

[2] Owing to the fact that Pennsylvania in 1800 had a Federalist Senate and a Republican House, the electors of the state were divided between the two parties, 8 being Republican and 7 Federalist. Jefferson and his friends claimed with considerable justification that this compromise did not represent public opinion as expressed in the election returns. See Philadelphia *Aurora*, November 15, 17, 1800. See also, however, Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, IV, 234–35.

III

AFFAIRS OF STATE

1800–1802

GOOD-STAY, NEAR NEW YORK, *December* 17, 1800

To Mr. Jefferson

So you are at the head of your wise country.[1] She has unreservedly placed her greatest man in her greatest position. You have won the heart of every one.

I ask God to bless your administration.

And I am sure He will bless it. For he has given you *Judgment, that light which glows in every man coming into this world*, but which does not glow in all with equal brilliance.

You have La Fayete (*sic*) with you,[2] whose kindness, uprightness, and attachment to this country make a fellowship worthy of your lofty and patriotic soul.

When my children, whom I have sent to Europe on business, have returned, I will go and settle in *Alexandria*,[3] where I have bought a house, in order to be nearer to the enjoyment of your accomplishments.

[1] Du Pont's congratulations were premature. The Republican candidates, Jefferson and Burr, were victorious, but owing to the defective organization of the electoral machinery, received an equal vote. The House of Representatives, called upon to choose between them, did not elect Jefferson until February 17, 1801.

[2] Lafayette wrote Jefferson a letter of congratulation, June 1, 1801. Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Apparently he never settled in Alexandria.

One of my sons whom *Lavoisier* instructed for five years in the manufacture and handling of gunpowder and who is one of the best powder manufacturers in France, where the best powder in the world is made, will establish here an excellent factory for the manufacture of this material which is indispensable to the defense of nations.[1]

The object of his trip to France is to bring back sundry machines of copper and bronze, which he could not get made here either as quickly or as well for thrice their cost.

I make so bold as to assert that he will send bullets a fifth *farther* than English or Dutch bullets travel.

And I beg you to keep this promise in mind and to make no contract for the powder for your arsenals before making a comparative test of that which we will make with others.

During your administration everything must and will be worthiest and best. And despite YOUR — OUR extremely *democratic principles*, it will be said that in this respect JEFFERSON *leans* toward the aristocratic. Also is acting the sublime *President of the universe*.

As a safeguard against the mails, I have kept a rough

[1] Eleuthère Irénée du Pont had served an apprenticeship at Essonne under Lavoisier, the superintendent of the powder works and his father's friend. He began to construct his own works in 1802 after his return from France and sold powder in 1804. See article by Broadus Mitchell, in *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. v (in press).

draft of my book on National Education in the United States. And whether you get it or not I hope to be able to translate it into English this winter, with many a regret that this PATOIS, forceful but incorrect and unphilosophical, is the language of your country.

My lasting and respectful affection.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

Pusy and Madame *Du Pont* bid me congratulate America through you on your accession to the Presidency. And I believe that Europe, the sciences, philosophy, and ethics deserve a share of the compliment.

My sons send their respects.

I desire my eldest who has thirteen years of residence, two children born in South Carolina (a state which is becoming quite dear to me), and an oath of allegiance to Virginia, to be fully naturalized as soon as possible.[1]

December 21

My son to whom I gave this letter to mail returns it to me with yours of the twelfth.

I am very glad that you enjoyed the pleasure which a runaway horse has. It will be a long time before you will have it again. You have been hitched to a *wagon* which loses none of its load. But Hercules bore the world.

[1] Victor du Pont. See note on Jefferson's letter of January 17, 1800, above. He served for a time as consul at Charleston.

You are extremely polite concerning the difficulty of translating my letters. That will be good practice in English for me. Imagine that my bold ambition mounts to the point of hoping that you will have the kindness to correct my composition.

NEW YORK, *February* 20, 1801

To greatest Man
in greatest place of the United States [1]

SIR,

You have never had but one *Vice*. I compliment your Country and both Hemispheres that you have at last lost it.[2]

Most respectfully yours
DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

NEW YORK, *December* 17, 1801

His Excellency
Thomas Jefferson

MR. PRESIDENT:

Your message,[3] like all your thoughts and writings, is full of wisdom, judgment, illumination, and contains a divine moral. But although I respect your nation, I fear that you are too big for her.[4]

[1] Coolidge Collection, Mass. Hist. Society. See frontispiece and note 1 on letter of December 17, 1800, above.

[2] Jefferson probably did not receive another letter of congratulation in French and containing an English pun.

[3] Jefferson's first annual message to Congress, December 8, 1801. See his *Writings* (Ford ed.), VIII, 108–25.

[4] The French is, "trop fort pour elle."

You congratulate her on her peace. This heavenly benediction seems to every inhabitant of your seaport cities a public calamity.[1]

You congratulate her on the Indians' becoming somewhat civilized: and on the increase, instead of the dwindling, of several of their tribes, due to their increased knowledge of agriculture. The inhabitants of your country districts regard — wrongfully, it is true — Indians and forests as natural enemies which must be exterminated by fire and sword and *brandy*, in order that they may seize their territory.

They regard themselves, themselves and their posterity, as collateral heirs to all the magnificent portion of land which God has created from the Cumberland and Ohio to the Pacific Ocean.

And where, even in Europe or the United States, is there to be found a younger branch of a family which will rejoice in the increase in children of the elder branch which it wishes to succeed?

You sound a warning that, by bettering the judiciary,[2] a great saving of *public funds* will be effected; you should have added "and private;" for the more judges there are, the more lawsuits there are, and these are among the heaviest burdens on a family.

[1] There was strong feeling against the French on the part of the commercial classes.

[2] That is, by reducing the federal judiciary, one of the major objectives of the Republican party. See A. J. Beveridge, *Life of John Marshall* (1919), III, chs. I, II.

And almost all of your young college graduates with enough spirit to be unwilling to enter the ministry and with too little fortune or patience for the long period of study which a doctor needs, who moreover has not and does not deserve in America the consideration which he should enjoy, wish to be lawyers or judges, sometimes both at the same time, pleading a case in one court, pronouncing sentence in another: a situation which has many inconveniences joined to a certain amount of ridicule.

As to the priests,[1] there is no use of your saying a word to them and protecting their freedom; you are a philosopher; still, there is not a one of them in the world, of any belief, who is not your enemy.

Thus you do, you propose, and you justly boast of real benefits which displease and will displease *only* your farmers, merchants, and men of letters.[2]

Against those citizens, what can the support of a foreigner like myself and of some dozen other thinkers scattered throughout the country avail?

[1] Du Pont uses the term "Prêtres." Jefferson himself generally referred to the clergy as priests and regarded them as his implacable foes. On the other hand, the Unitarian Joseph Priestley was intimate with him and at this time he commanded strong support from the groups, in Virginia and elsewhere, who stood to gain from his advocacy of religious freedom.

[2] The meaning of this passage is not clear. Apparently Du Pont feels that the farmers will be displeased to hear of the improved condition of the Indians, alleged by Jefferson in his message, and that the merchants will be impatient with the peaceful conditions of which he boasts. There was nothing in Jefferson's message or policy, however, of which men of letters would disapprove.

Thus you will find thorns among your roses, your olives, and your laurels.

However, persist. For Socrates and Cato and Confucius and Marcus Aurelius and my holy friend Turgot, to whom you have such a close affinity, would have persisted in your place.

First, for a man like you, it is not a question of knowing what will be said, but of clear seeing and well doing. And then, if your people seem hardly to notice you, they are tractable and in no way disposed to bother the government. There are still forty months of your administration and many probabilities that you will be re-elected. For it is one thing to see oneself generally applauded in *speeches*; another, to win elections. There is in the United States more than anywhere else silent common sense, a spirit of cold justice which, when it is a question of casting a vote, silences the chatter of the merely clever.

And among these last even, a necessary hypocrisy does not permit them to show the depth of their hearts. They would not dare openly rise against peace. They would not dare say aloud to their neighbors or perhaps even to their wives that it would be good to kill the Indians.

So shame and the times are in your favor. The reduction of taxes, the kind of argument within the comprehension of everybody, is in your favor. The suppression of the imposts for which it was so unfortunate

to employ military force,[1] which did not make them more acceptable, is entirely in your favor.

If you are once re-elected, as I do not doubt you will be, you will be so for the rest of your life.[2] Washington would have been, had he not overruled it. And in spite of your great competition Mr. Adams himself perhaps would have been, had he been a little cleverer and if Mr. Hamilton had not dragged him through the mud.[3] Change has no charm for Americans. It will have still less in your case, since not even one plausible pretext could be found to justify it.

You are healthy and strong. You ought to live as long as Franklin. That is more than enough for you to do creative work with those children who today are only ten years old, a new generation which will have received no bad influence from war and waste.

From the very effect of your administration and from the instruction which you will have given them, those children will be of greater value than their fathers.

You will be aided in their education by all the outstanding and enlightened men of Europe,[4] who ten

[1] Referring to the suppression of the "Whiskey Rebellion" in 1794.

[2] Du Pont disapproved of Jefferson's retirement in 1809. See below, letter of August 13, 1807, and May 25, 1808.

[3] See Hamilton's letter on "The Public Conduct and Character of John Adams," 1800, in his *Works* (Federal ed., 1904), VII, 309–64.

[4] See Gilbert Chinard, *Jefferson et les Idéologues* (1925), ch. I, for a discussion of the sympathetic attitude of French liberals toward Jefferson and the hopes he aroused in them.

years hence will begin to cultivate with ardor the moral and political sciences, just because their governments will not want them to. For Europeans, who really do not know how to defy authority, still take pleasure in contradicting it. They have a "demi-courage," both in speaking and writing, which will be an excellent instrument for you. And the small number of those who are really bold will come and live under your laws, as I have done, because a century or two hence there is no liberty to be hoped for in any part of Europe, and peace itself without liberty is only a cold and tasteless pleasure. The son of my youth is named *Victor*; I have called that of my cold reason *Eleuthère Irénée* (Eleutherius Irenæus).[1] There will be others than he.[2]

This *peaceful friend of liberty*, although he manufactures gunpowder, hopes that it will not be used for war but for those functions which prevent war, those functions to which our military and our youth must devote themselves; that is, to the business of the country, to hunting, to the opening of mountains and canals, to all public works.

I did not want to write you about him while you were busy with Galatin [*sic*], probing the wounds of your finances and preparing for Congress your political works and your projects. Now since all that is progress-

[1] From the Greek, *eleutheros* and *eirene*, explained in the next paragraph.

[2] Presumably, more "peaceful friends of liberty," not more children.

ing so nicely and you will not find it necessary to have further personal conferences with members of the House and Senate — only ordinary correspondence — I will give you an account of our ideas and just how we stand. That will be the purpose of another letter.

Bless you for making naturalization easier, for this country needs capital and brawn.[1]

In this respect your answer was priceless to those men who would refuse their contemporaries what waste lands and savages did not refuse their fathers.

I also like your clever remark about the temptation to pile up treasures which would lead to other disastrous temptations and which might give birth to a war by preparing for it.

Summon people again to turn their attention to the means of multiplying man and not of destroying him.

With these maxims you will enchant one half of the human race, and finally the other half.

It is impossible for a philosopher and statesman not to be a great writer. For he necessarily expresses with clarity those truths whose evidence strikes him, and with soundness those which interest the state which he governs and, as you say, *sister states*.

My regards and respects

Du Pont (de Nemours)

[1] The Act of 1798, which rendered naturalization slower and was designed by the Federalists to prevent the addition of foreign votes to the Republicans, was repealed by the latter in 1802.

Madame Du Pont shares all my feelings about you and your work. Say a few words to Mr. Madison for me.

WASHINGTON, *Jan.* 18, 1802

M. Dupont [1]

DEAR SIR

It is rare I can indulge myself in the luxury of philosophy. Your letters give me a few of those delicious moments. Placed as you are in a great commercial town, with little opportunity of discovering the dispositions of the country portions of our citizens, I do not wonder at your doubts whether they will generally & sincerely concur in the sentiments and measures developed in my message of the 7th Jany.[2] But from 40. years of intimate conversation with the agricultural inhabitants of my country, I can pronounce them as different from those of the cities, as those of any two nations known. The sentiments of the former can in no degree be inferred from those of the latter. You have spoken a profound truth in these words, "*Il y a dans les etats unis un bon sens silencieux, un esprit de justice froide, qui lorsqu'il est question d'emettre un* VOTE *couvre les bavardages de ceux qui font les habiles.*" [3] A plain country farmer has

[1] Published in Jefferson's *Writings* (Ford ed.), VIII, 125–27, note. This text, however, has been compared with the dim original in the Library of Congress and is published here with some slight corrections.

[2] Probably a mistake for 7th December. The message as transmitted to Congress was dated December 8.

[3] See the foregoing letter from Du Pont. Jefferson does not repeat every word. In the Ford edition, "*comme*" is used for "*couvre.*"

written lately a pamphlet on our public affairs. His testimony of the sense of the country is the best which can be produced of the justness of your observation. His words are "The tongue of man is not his whole body. So, in this case, the noisy part of the community was not all the body politic. During the career of fury and contention (in 1800) the sedate, grave part of the people were still; hearing all, and judging for themselves, what method to take, when the constitutional time of action should come, the exercise of the right of suffrage." [1] The majority of the present legislature are in unison with the agricultural part of our citizens, and you will see that there is nothing in the message, to which they do not accord. Some things may perhaps be left undone from motives of compromise for a time, and not to alarm by too sudden a reformation: but with a view to be resumed at another time. I am perfectly satisfied the effect of the proceedings of this session of Congress will be to consolidate the great body of well-meaning citizens together, whether federal or republican, heretofore called. I do not mean to include royalists or priests. Their opposition is immoveable. But they will be *vox et preterea nihil*, leaders without followers. I am satisfied that within one year from this time were an election to take place between two candidates merely republican and federal, where no personal

[1] Pamphlet not yet discovered.

opposition existed against either, the federal candidate would not get the vote of a single elector in the U.S. I must here again appeal to the testimony of my farmer, who says "The great body of the people are one in sentiment. If the federal party and the republican party, should each of them choose a convention to frame a constitution of government or a code of laws, there would be no radical difference in the results of the two conventions." This is most true. The body of our people, tho' divided for a short time by an artificial panic, and called by different names, have ever had the same object in view, to wit, the maintenance of a federal, republican government, and have never ceased to be all federalists, all republicans: still excepting the noisy band of royalists inhabiting cities chiefly, and priests both of city and country. When I say that in an election between a republican and federal candidate, free from personal objection, the former would probably get every vote, I must not be understood as placing myself in that view. It was my destiny to come to the government when it had for several years been committed to a particular political sect, to the absolute and entire exclusion of those who were in sentiment with the body of the nation. I found the country entirely in the enemy's hands. It was necessary to dislodge some of them. Out of many thousands of officers in the U.S. 9. only have been removed for political principle, and 12.

for delinquencies chiefly pecuniary.[1] The whole herd have squealed out, as if all their throats were cut. These acts of justice few as they have been, have raised great personal objections to me, of which a new character would be [illegible].

When this government was first established, it was possible to have kept it going on true principles, but the contracted, English, half-lettered ideas of Hamilton, destroyed that hope in the bud. We can pay off his debt in 15. years: but we can never get rid of his financial system. It mortifies me to be strengthening principles which I deem radically vicious, but this vice is entailed on us by a first error. In other parts of our government I hope we shall be able by degrees to introduce sound principles and make them habitual. What is practicable must often controul what is pure theory: and the habits of the governed determine in a great degree what is practicable. Hence the same original principles, modified in practice according to the different habits of different nations, present governments of very different aspects. The same principles reduced to forms of practice accommodated to our habits, and put into forms accommodated to the habits of the French nation, would present governments very unlike each other. I have no doubt but that a great man,

[1] For a scholarly discussion of Jefferson's policy in regard to removals and appointments, see C. R. Fish, *The Civil Service and the Patronage* (1920), ch. 2.

thoroughly knowing the habits of France, might so accommodate to them the principles of free government, as to enable them to live free. But in the hands of those who have not this *coup d'oeil*, many unsuccessful experiments I fear are yet to be tried before they will settle down in freedom and tranquility. I applaud therefore your determination to remain here, where, tho' for yourself and the adults of your family the dissimilitude of our manners and the difference of tongue will be sources of real unhapiness, yet less so than the horrors and dangers which France would present to you. And as to those of your family still in infancy, they will be formed as to the circumstances of the country, and will, I doubt not be happier here than they could have been in Europe under any circumstances. Be so good as to make my respectful salutations acceptable to Made. Dupont, and all of your family and to be assured yourself of my constant and affectionate esteem.

TH: JEFFERSON

NEW YORK, *February* 20, 1802

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the American Philosophical Society,[1]
Member of the Institut National de France
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

About a month ago I received letters from the Insti-

[1] Jefferson was President of this famous society, 1797–1815. His election to the Institute, if attributable to his position, was due to his presidency of the American Philosophical Society rather than to his presidency of the United States.

tut, in which I was told: "We shall proceed immediately to the nomination of eighty foreign members.[1] Let us have the names of those men in the United States, whom you think ought to be proposed." I replied immediately: "You will find few men in Europe, even for the other branches of learning, and none in the world for our *class* of morals and politics, who can be compared to President Jefferson."

Now I learn from the newspapers that without waiting for my suggestion the Institut thought as I did, and it is precisely in our *class* of political and moral science that you have been placed.[2]

Permit me to congratulate myself and take pride in this new relationship with you.

My regards and respects.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

Since the President of the United States is a member of the Institut National de France, he must use his influence in doing a favor to one of his fellow-members,

[1] The law of 1795 provided for 24 *associés étrangers*.

[2] Jefferson was elected, December 26, 1801, foreign associate in the class of moral and political sciences, to which Du Pont himself belonged. See Franqueville, *Le Premier Siècle de l'Institut de France*, II, 55. Only Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, preceded him on the list. Haydn, the composer, was chosen at the same time. No other American by both birth and residence was elected to the Institute during Jefferson's life. See Chinard, *Jefferson et les Idéologues*, pp. 20–21, for his acceptance of appointment. The class of moral and political sciences was abolished in 1803 and he passed to that of history and literature. In 1816, when there was another change in organization, he passed to *l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*.

the excellent sculptor Houdon. He left in the United States a very fine bust of Benjamin Franklin, which is just now at my home. This marble bust is worth a hundred louis of our money, about 480 dollars.

Nothing is more suitable than for the nation to place it in your Capitol, either at the expense of the United States or at that of the City of Washington, or through the subscription of twenty-four people at twenty dollars each. And Houdon to whom Virginia still owes a thousand crowns toward the statue of Washington is in real need of money.

I refer that to your kindness, to your position, and to your wisdom.

NEW YORK, *April* 2, 1802

To His Excellency
Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

I beg you to consent to my putting in your envelope a rather long memorandum which I have been bidden to transmit to Mr. Bushrood Washington,[1] and which concerns our friend La Fayette.

I have already taken the liberty of sending you the letter which Minister Barbé-Marbois [2] wrote to General

[1] Bushrod Washington, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

[2] François Barbé Marbois, Minister of the Public Treasury of France, who later negotiated the Louisiana Purchase.

Davies and I know of no other way of getting it to him.

You will doubtless have the kindness to read it, as I asked you to do. And your friendship for La Fayette will surely interest you deeply in his situation.[1]

Your plenipotentiaries had given his friends hope that Congress would find it worthy of the United States to help this able and intrepid warrior, this honorable and intelligent mediator, this man of purity and virtue, who helped it.

They had gone so far as to think that there might be given to him:

$20,000 to pay what he owes to citizens of the United States;

$20,000 in cattle of good stock and first class agricultural implements for stocking his farm;

$20,000 in shares in the Bank of the United States;

$60,000

Are there any measures to take with regard to that?

If there are not, who will arrange this?

If measures are taken, will they have any success?

This is what I am asking of your friendship.

For you and your friends to lend your support is useless for me to ask. You are already well enough disposed to the projects, yourself.

[1] A considerable grant of land in Louisiana was afterwards made Lafayette by the United States, but he gained little or no benefit from it. On the occasion of his visit to America in 1824, he received a very handsome present in money.

The session is getting on. I should think there is not a moment to be lost by those who take this matter in hand.

My sincerest regards and deep affection.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

IV

THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

1802–1803

WASHINGTON, *Apr.* 25, 1802

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

DEAR SIR,

The week being now closed during which you had given me a hope of seeing you here, I think it safe to inclose you my letters for Paris lest they should fail of the benefit of so desirable a conveyance. They are addressed [to] Kosciuzko, Volney, Madame de Corny, Mr. Short, and Chancellor Livingston. You will perceive the unlimited confidence I repose in your good faith [and] in your cordial dispositions to serve both countries, when you observe that I leave the letter for Chancellor Livingston open for your perusal.[2] The first page respects a cypher, as do the loose sheets folded with the letter. These are interesting to him & myself only, and therefore are not for your perusal. It is the 2d. 3d. & 4th. pages which I wish you to read to possess yourself of completely, and then seal the letter with wafers stuck under the flying seal that it may be seen

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Memorial ed.), x, 315–19. The above text, however, has been corrected from the press copy of the original.

[2] Jefferson's letter of April 18, 1802, to Robert R. Livingston, Minister to France, has been frequently cited in connection with the negotiations which led to the Louisiana Purchase. See his *Writings* (Ford ed.), VIII, 143–47.

by no body else if any accident should happen to you. I wish you to be possessed of the subject, because you may be able to impress on the government of France the inevitable consequences of their taking possession of Louisiana; [1] and tho', as I here mention, the cession of N. Orleans & the Floridas to us would be palliative; yet I believe it would be no more; and that this measure will cost France, & perhaps not very long hence, a war which will annihilate her on the ocean, and place that element under the despotism of two nations, which I am not reconciled to the more because my own would be one of them. Add to this the exclusive appropriation of both continents of America as a consequence. I wish the present order of things to continue, and with a view to this I value highly a state of friendship between France & us. You know too well how sincere I have ever been in these dispositions to doubt them. You know too how much I value peace, and how unwillingly I should see any event take place which would render war a necessary resource; and that all our movements should change their character and object. I am thus open with you, because I trust that you will have it in your power to impress on that government considerations, in the scale against which the possession of

[1] By this time Jefferson had received relatively conclusive information that Louisiana had been retroceded by Spain to France. In his letter to Livingston he stated that from the moment the French took possession of New Orleans, "we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation."

Louisiana is nothing. In Europe, nothing but Europe is seen, or supposed to have any right in the affairs of nations. But this little event, of France's possessing herself of Louisiana, which is thrown in as nothing, as a mere make-weight, in the general settlement of accounts, this speck which now appears as an almost invisible point in the horizon, is the embryo of a tornado which will burst on the countries on both sides of the Atlantic and involve in it's effects their highest destinies. That it may yet be avoided is my sincere prayer, and if you can be the means of informing the wisdom of Buonaparte of all it's consequences, you [will] have deserved well of both countries. Peace and abstinence from European interferences are our objects, and so will continue while the present order of things in America remain uninterrupted. There is another service you can render. I am told that Talleyrand is personally hostile to us. This I suppose, has been occasioned by the XYZ history.[1] But he should consider that that was the artifice of a party,[2] willing to sacrifice him to the consolidation of their power: That this nation has done him justice by dismissing them; that those in power [now], are precisely those who disbelieved that

[1] Talleyrand was Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Directory and bore the odium of the improper proposals made to the American commissioners in 1798 and revealed to the American public in the "X.Y.Z. dispatches." He was again in this office under Napoleon. Jefferson obviously wished to conciliate him.

[2] The Federalist party, in power until 1801.

story, and saw in it nothing but an attempt to deceive our country: that we entertain towards him personally the most friendly dispositions; that as to the government of France, we know too little of the state of things there, to understand what it is, and have no inclination to meddle in their settlement. Whatever government they establish, we wish to be well with it.

One more request, that you deliver the letter to Chancellor Livingston with your own hands, and moreover that you charge Made. Dupont, if any accident happens to you, that she deliver the letter with her own hands. If it passes thro' only her's and your's, I shall have perfect confidence in it's safety. Present her my most sincere respects, and accept yourself assurances of my constant affection, and my prayers that a genial sky and propitious gales may place you after a pleasant voyage, in the midst of your friends.

TH: JEFFERSON

NEW YORK, *April* 26, 1802

To His Excellency
Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

Your kind letter adds to my worry, because I find it absolutely impossible to take ten days which would be necessary for the trip to Washington.[1]

[1] He is referring, not to Jefferson's letter of April 25, which he had not yet received, but to another letter, not yet discovered, in which Jefferson

I must leave before the calm begins, for I must get there. A tiny pebble placed in time or at the right spot to stop or deflect the course of a torrent.

As to my understanding your letters, a word — or even a half word — to the wise is sufficient.

My heart, my reason, my principles, my love for both countries understand yours.

I could be assured of your inviolable and courageous neutrality in case war should be renewed or already has been renewed.[1]

I think I can say that you are so well acquainted with the justice and advantages of commercial freedom that, provided wise and efficient means of payment be taken, abundant supplies can be found in your country.

Must I not reject the too widespread notion that every remembrance of the former services rendered by France is effaced from the memory of America?

The claim is made that you have had the notion to buy Louisiana. If there is anything true in this, I think this notion safe and acceptable.

I have that of keeping for your nation the commercial freedom of Santo Domingo, at least for a fairly long time.

apparently had invited him to Washington for conference. The letter of April 25 was written after Jefferson had concluded Du Pont was not coming.

[1] War between France and Great Britain was renewed the following spring.

I shall see Chancellor Livingston. Perhaps I shall not be entirely useless to him with regard to the people with whom he is treating and through the knowledge which I have of the customs of the nation.

I should have liked to know before leaving whether our dear friend La Fayette can hope for some honorable and useful proof of affection from the United States.

And another matter less important but still interesting to me, whether Houdon can hope that the superb bust of Franklin, the possession of which I have and which he has need to sell, will be placed in a room of the Capitol.

Do not look upon my trip as a retreat. You see its motive. I am leaving in America my two sons, their wives, and my grandchildren, and my whole fortune and every hope of repose for my old days.

During my absence protect my children. The elder is a real American, a man of spirit and a good business man in every respect. The second has much knowledge, especially with regard to the useful arts. God has given him great courage and a republican heart. His gunpowder factory which will cost us more than fourteen thousand dollars will much improve this line of business in the United States, and will in good time be a means of wealth and power.

My best regards to you,

Du Pont (de Nemours)

I am counting on leaving Philadelphia the fifth of May on the *Benjamin Franklin.*

Be so kind as to address your letters to Philadelphia.

NEW YORK, *April* 30, 1802 [1]

To His Excellency
Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

I received your letter and your dispatches. I have read the one with which you permitted me to make myself acquainted. I will pass them on with care and I will support their contents with all my feeble might.

I understand the entire importance of their subject. It is the principal purpose of my trip. A war which would deprive me of America's pleasant sanctuary, unless I determined to renounce completely my native land, would be for me personally one of the greatest of misfortunes.

But since a person succeeds better, the more enlightened he is, the more extended information he has, the greater means of making distinctions he has, and of making the proper emphasis in his suggestions and speeches, permit me to make several observations;

[1] The date of this letter is either April 20 or 30. Jefferson, who received it May 3, thought Du Pont had written April 20 by mistake. From internal evidence, it would appear that April 30 is correct, as Jefferson thought, and that the letter is a reply to Jefferson's of April 25, above.

permit me even to put before you at times the speech of those with whom I would have to deal; for to arrive at an agreement, it is necessary to foresee and weigh all that will be said on both sides.

The basis of your reasoning is as follows: "Louisiana can be France's only until the first war comes. In this first war, our interest in owning her will put us on the offensive during hostilities. And the English with their navy standing in the way of France's bringing aid, our geographic position, the military force which we shall be able to employ will necessarily overcome any resistance offered by a distant country and inferior navy."

A soldier will be able to understand easily that the weight of *one column* stretching from the district of Maine to the Mississipi [*sic*] must surely penetrate the *front line*, whatever it might be, which would be established along the banks of that river.[1]

But one day this soldier, whose ministers can pre-

[1] This paragraph and the two which follow have proved so difficult of translation that we cite the French, as best we could decipher it:

"Un militaire pourra comprendre aisément que le poids d'*une colonne* qui va depuis le district de Maine jusqu'au Mississipi doit en effet percer [?] le *front de bandiere*, tel qu'il pût être, qu'on établirait sur les rives de ce fleuve.

"Mais un jour ce militaire, dont les ministres ne peuvent conserver leurs places qu'en encensant perpétuellement l'orqueil militaire, sera beaucoup plus offensé que touché de cette raison. — Et s'il n'y a qu'elle en avant, nous pouvons regarder la négociation comme manquée.

"Voici comme on lui parlera pour soutenir par des raisons politiques *l'irritation* qu'aura excitée la menace, plus ou moins envelopée de protestations, de le déposseder malgré lui."

serve their positions only by perpetually flattering his military pride, will be much more irritated than impressed by that reason. And if that is the only one put forward, we may regard the business as having failed.

This is what will be said to him to justify by political reasons the *irritation* which the threat of ousting him in spite of himself — more or less disguised by protests — will have aroused in him.

"The United States," he will be told, "and even the President, betray an ambition of conquest which you must suppress. Louisiana in the hands of Spain did not make them uneasy because they do not consider Spain a first class power; and because they saw in this colony of the Mississipi only an inn for shelter and a storehouse necessary to the army by means of which they one day count on making the conquest of Mexico. But it is precisely to keep Mexico more securely that Spain let you have this colony. She wanted the power of the two nations to hold within proper bounds this spirit of invasion which the United States can no longer and will no longer dissimulate. You would fail your ally if you gave up the advance post entrusted to you."

That your nation in general, Mr. President, and especially that the ambition of your nation, has its thoughts on the conquest of Mexico, is no longer doubtful. The generals, the officers, and even the

soldiers will have much to gain. The army will be very easily recruited.

But the United States, and especially a philosopher and friend of mankind, and real friend of his country (such as is President Jefferson) will have much to lose.

The victorious army will be corrupted forever. Those of its fighters who return into the interior will carry thither every crime, every vice.

Those who remain in the conquered territory will make of it a redoubtable neighbor with whom it will be necessary for the United States to be in a perpetual state of war.

If the victorious general founds a monarchy, it will certainly not become an ally of your republic. If you can found a republic there, you will try in vain to league it with yours. Already you see how much wisdom, prudence, tact, is needed to maintain the unity of your own states. What would this new republic be like, almost as powerful in herself alone as they are all together, much richer, whose center of power would be at such a great distance from the center of your union.

Mexico in the hands of Spain can harm you in no way, and by business connections easy to establish can be of much service to you. Mexico aroused by revolution and brought to the height of your civilization by your citizens who would live there, who would leave your territory for her and cease to better its condition,

would be, one could imagine, most hostile to your peace, your liberty, and your prosperity. She would be harmful to you as a rival for power. She would be harmful to you by constantly enticing and taking away your population.

It is not enough for you as President not to think this; you must persuade France and Spain that you have not thought it; you must uproot this from your nation, by showing it to what a dreadful consequence this fatal temptation would bring it.

Therefore it is necessary to act with the greatest insistence so as to be able to assure an outlet for the products of those states along the Cumberland, the Wabash, the two banks of the Ohio, and the left bank of the Mississipi itself.

But you will be told that this freedom in commerce, this certainty of an outlet, can be guaranteed you by a treaty with France as well as by a treaty with Spain: that this treaty maintained by mutual interests would be a pledge of lasting friendship instead of a source of quarrels between the two nations; and that finally if it were violated by the French, you would always find again, but with more dignity and justice, the expedient of territorial control over a weak and isolated colony which your friends, the English, would keep from being succored.

It will be asked why this uneasiness about the French

who are quite disposed to leave you the ports of the Mississipi open with small customs and duties which could be determined by a commercial treaty, while the English, more jealous and disdainful, do not seem to bother or displease you in Canada, although they refuse you an outlet through the St. Lawrence, which would be almost as natural as one through the Mississipi, an outlet which two canals, one at Niagara, the other starting at the Monongahela and costing not even two million dollars, would give, of the greatest importance to your western states already existing and to exist.

It will be said that these feelings so peaceful toward the English, so hostile and already so pregnant with threats to the French, who are returning into the possession of one of their former inheritances, of which a part, and the finest part too, has already been ceded to you by Spain [1] and which will not be contested by them, exhibit a partiality toward England, at which the French nation and government must be shocked and as uneasy as you seem to be yourselves.

It will be said, and certainly on this point it will be rightly said, that if the English are angling for you with the bait of a passing alliance to despoil Spain, and are flattering you by letting you become the second sea power, they are deceiving you and your trust in them

[1] Perhaps referring to the land assured the United States by the Treaty of San Lorenzo, 1795, which fixed the southern boundary at the 31st parallel.

deceives you. The English hate and will always hate second- and even third-rate sea powers. They would make you suffer bitterly, if you attained that honor which is more costly than useful. Their actual and fancied persecutions would then cause an alliance with France and all the blood spilled in the meantime would be lost.

Only France wishes you to be a sea power. Only England fears it.

This being granted, it will be agreed that you have no need of New Orleans and the mouth of the Mississipi except for the free and lasting passage for the products of your western states, and a commercial treaty suffices to assure you of them and of the passage of your vessels. What answer can be returned to that?

However, you prefer a treaty which gives you land rather than a treaty which would guarantee you rights. And I do not deny that, first, it would be better for you, and second, that it would be of small importance to France.

But we must begin by agreeing on one point; namely, that the United States will never show any new desire with regard to the right bank of the river; that its use will be equal and common to the two nations; and that the middle of the stream will be the boundary between the two states. For it is really to the interest of the three peoples, and to that of the world,

that the might of France and Spain unite to discourage the temptation which the United States might have some day to conquer Mexico.

With this point agreed on, it is desirable to know what are your means of persuasion to obtain the arrangement you desire. To say: "Give us this country; if you do not we will take it" is not at all persuasive. "We will defend it," is the first answer in every man's mouth. "We will prevent you," might be tacitly added as a second reply in ordinary politics. And every misfortune which we wish to prevent would take place.

You wish the surrender of a piece of land which France legitimately owns. Were you to say: "Give us that part of Louisiana which we like, give us the Floridas, and we will induce the English to give you Canada," were you to say at least, "We assume the engagement at the first war to help to return Canada to your possession," that would be some sort of proposition, that would be definite talk — and I would dare to guarantee you that France would give you through her Canada every freedom of business, every outlet, which the English refuse to give you.

But perhaps the first point is beyond your influence over England. Perhaps also you would not want to assume the definite engagement of the second, although you seem already ready to unite with the English against us in the matter of Louisiana.

Where then are your means of acquisition and of persuading France to a friendly surrendering of her property?

Alas! Mr. President, the freedom of conventions, the natural taste of all peoples, of all individuals, for riches, and the poverty with which all great powers are constantly threatened, which only powers of the second rank escape, leave you only one means when you have nothing of like sort to offer in exchange. That means is acquisition, it is the payment of money.

Calculate what that very slight armament cost you, which you made three years ago. Consider what the most fortunate war with France and Spain would cost you. And contract for a part — a half, let us say. The two countries will have made a good bargain. You will have Louisiana and probably the Floridas for the least possible expense; and this conquest will be neither [animated] by hatred nor sullied by human blood.

France will ask you the most possible, you will offer the least possible. But offer her enough to make her make up her mind before she takes possession. For the interests of governors, of prefects, and of business companies would become powerful obstacles. These treaties must be quickly made; the longer you bargain and the worse the bargain you make, the more complete would the break be.

Please be so kind as to write to me in New York about

this. I am certain not to leave before the tenth of May and I may stay several days longer, depending on wind and business. If I am compelled to leave before receiving your letter, my son would send it back to you and you could ask Chancellor Livingston to let me know your mind on the matter.

Count on my unfaltering enthusiasm, on my unchanging attachment, on my gratitude for your friendship, and on my affectionate and profound respect.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

New York, *May* 12, 1802

To His Excellency
Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

Mr. President,

I receive your letters on time and with great pleasure. You add much to my gratitude, nothing to my zeal, which could not increase, and little to my means of action.

You give me your motives, your reasons, your deductions, your forethoughts; I have them in my head and heart. The facilities must be increased and hastened. The determining features must be promptly presented to a young court [*jeune cour*] in a position similar to that with which you have to deal.

It is certain that if you foresee the misunderstanding, the war, and their grievous results, they must be pre-

vented by a kind of subscription which will procure you what you wish and which will always be a great economy. For the most fortunate war, not to mention the calamities which are inseparable from it and the kind of subordination in which it will place you relative to England, will necessarily cost your treasury four times the largest sum at which may be valued a harmonious arrangement and reciprocal good will. It will cost ten times more in so far as your commerce, agriculture, and nation are concerned.

I know the condition of your finances. I know that it is bad and quite impossible for you to change. But for your actual needs in time of peace they are quite sufficient.

You can pay your debts in less than fifteen years. When, to acquire New Orleans and the Floridas and to do so without war, you should extend this period by three or four years, you would have made an excellent bargain, even from a pecuniary point of view.

New Orleans will always be the *de facto* capital of the two Louisianas; because it is a city already entirely built and the other has to be built, because there are shops and wharves already constructed, and because French is spoken there so that the French people will always be remembered. It will be to the advantage of New Orleans to cultivate the other bank of the river.

The Floridas are not worth cultivating by the *plough* or for grain. But to raise sheep, vicugnas, horses, and

mules, they can be a valuable piece of land. Arabia where the finest horses in the world are, resembles the Floridas in land and climate. And the Floridas have a great advantage over Arabia: this is that they are covered with better building woods and do not lack rivers to facilitate their exploitation and distribution. A wise government like yours, which in its leases could take measures to keep these woods from being entirely destroyed and to enable them to become renewed while cutting down a part, would find there for its people and for itself a constant source of great wealth.

There is in all this food for thought. And since this country suits you, it is my earnest advice that you place a good estimate on it, even a liberal and generous one, one, as I said, calculated to impress a court. In such a case, too great economy is an expense; and a purchase thus missed becomes next a purchase quite burdensome. The amount offered and accepted will preclude in no way, in whole or in part, the equivalent of that sum owed by France by reason of the treaty.

Agreement as to the price is the main thing. To arrange the manner of payment and to figure on this payment the amounts deductible by law is a minor matter which would straighten itself out.

The rest of your instructions are easy to follow and will be followed exactly.

To show you full and fair justice, kind treatment,

good payment for the supplies furnished by your citizens at Santo Domingo [1] is one of the objects which I have assumed as a duty.

It is quite possible that General LeClerc [2] has found some trace and proof of a secret treaty and agreements more or less specific which took place between the ministers of your predecessors and Toussaint l'Ouverture; [3] and that there must be sought the use (taken advantage of in the case of Mr. Lear) of the right stipulated in the treaty of dismissing consuls without explanation: [4] a right which your plenipotentiaries asked and France was unwilling to grant. The justifiably bad humor he was in with regard to this matter, the supplies of arms negotiated for by General Maitland [5] for Toussaint, realized by the United

[1] The seizure of American property by the French in Santo Domingo was a serious cause of American discontent and distrust at the time.

[2] The husband of Pauline Bonaparte and commander of the French expedition to Santo Domingo. Subsequent to the date of this letter, he got possession of Toussaint l'Ouverture, the extraordinary negro leader of the revolt against French rule, and sent him to Europe to die. He himself died of yellow fever in November, 1802. For the revolt and the important part it played in the whole matter of the Louisiana negotiations, see Henry Adams, *History of the United States* (1889), chs. xv, xvi.

[3] Such secret arrangements were indeed made during the period of quasi-warfare between the United States and France, 1798–1800. American supplies, procured by Toussaint, contributed greatly to his temporary success. *Ibid.*, I, 385–86.

[4] Tobias Lear, appointed Consul-General to Santo Domingo by Jefferson, was ordered by Leclerc to quit the island.

[5] British representative in Santo Domingo who negotiated a secret treaty with Toussaint in 1799, to which the United States was in effect a party.

States, used against our army, these things will possibly account for the manner in which several Americans were treated. I do not doubt that the ill-feeling caused by this passed across to France and that I shall find it rather bitter. But I shall freely answer that since these wrongs were committed by the government preceding yours, they can not be imputed to you. You certainly do not reproach our present government with those of the Directory.

To secure for the citizens of the United States the business of Santo Domingo, of Guadaloupe, and of Guiana is another point entirely in accord with my political views, because it is to the mutual advantage of both nations, although quite in opposition to the prejudices of our merchants and to the views of the business concerns of Paris. But I hope for its success, because Bonaparte is a man of genius and a character much above ordinary ideas.

But enough about public matters.

What you tell me relative to La Fayette disappoints me keenly.[1] No man has nobler and purer qualities. How could one possibly reproach him with being faithful to the constitution which he had sworn to defend? That constitution, although quite republican, was not, it is true, as republican as he and I had desired, had proposed, but we had given it our oath. I as well as he

[1] Presumably Jefferson had stated some of the arguments advanced against the making of a grant to Lafayette.

fought with pen and sword to uphold it as long as the nation did not adopt another; and I do not consider myself open to censure. The handful of brigands of the tenth of August was not the People; it was not even a hundredth part of the population of Paris. That revolution occurred despite the Legislature, despite the nation, and especially despite good citizens.

Besides, here it is not a question of our revolution but of yours and your liberty. It is that which cost La Fayette seven years of his life and a hundred thousand francs of his fortune.

Although your young men can have neither a clear idea nor a distinct remembrance of his services, there must be several well enough disposed to honor him by proposing to the Majesty of the United States to *indemnify* a clear-sighted patriot, an illustrious warrior, who served them well and freely, and to reimburse him in his misfortune by about half of what he spent for them in his days of wealth.

Your plenipotentiaries had made his friends hope so. They had even indicated in what way it was to be given: twenty thousand dollars in cattle of fine breed and good farm instruments with which to stock his farm, twenty thousand in money with which to pay his most pressing debts, the most of which are owed to citizens of America, and twenty thousand dollars in shares in the Bank of the United States.

I know that it is not fitting for you to *propose* that, but nothing prevents your *suggesting* it, or *having it suggested* cleverly by some young member of the House of Representatives, who has love for American justice, dignity, and glory.

Must it be given up? I would grieve more for your nation than for La Fayette who has not even an idea of what his friends are trying to do for him on this occasion.

I see that Houdon will be less unhappy. I thank you. Do not forget him. It is my son Victor to whom I am leaving in New York the power of attorney which M. Houdon had given to me and to whom the money which is due him and which will be due him will have to be turned over.

I thank you for my children. It is near Wilmington, Delaware, on the Brandy-Wine, that we have finally decided to establish our powder factory. We are quite close to Philadelphia where we get your saltpeter refined. Once refined, you will keep it without waste and, at your first order, you will be able to get made with the greatest speed powder superior in power to the best in Europe. But, my excellent friend, do not burn it against us. Sell it rather in our colonies.

Regards and good wishes,

Du Pont (de Nemours)

I did not leave on the *Franklin.* I leave from New York on the *Virginia Packet.*

PARIS, *October* 4, 1802 [1]

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson,
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

Our negotiations have not had the success which I should have wished for them. However, I am far from believing them in as bad a way as Chancellor Livingston appears to think, who is quite irritated at not receiving any positive replies in writing, for the verbal ones are good.

There can be no doubt that your treaties with Spain relative to the boundaries of the two states, commerce, and the navigation of the Mississipi (*sic*), will be respected, confirmed, and renewed.

It is certain that it is to the interest of France for the commerce of the United States to enjoy every right and even every favor in New Orleans; and that the administrators sent there are convinced of the truth of this, for they seem disposed to act accordingly.

There is no doubt, furthermore, that if the fact were true (and it is quite improbable) that the English were more favored in Santo Domingo than the Americans, it was quite contrary to the most strongly pronounced intentions of the French Government, which gives in this matter, as in all other matters of business, the most absolute preference to the Americans over the English.

[1] By August 16, 1802, Du Pont was in Paris. On that date he wrote Jefferson a letter, which has not yet been located.

As to New Orleans and the Floridas, it appears that there is the desire to take possession before entering upon any negotiations. But, after these preliminaries are fulfilled, there is no obstacle to our entering upon negotiations.

If it became me to advise the two powers on this matter, attached as I am to both by every sort of duty, and believing that I have carefully thought out their respective interests, I should propose what you will find on the next page.

Article I.

France will cede to the United States New Orleans and the two Floridas, on the condition that the French and their vessels will be able to conduct their business as freely as the citizens and vessels of the United States, and without paying any duties.

Article II.

The United States agrees to allow no other nation to share these advantages, which is a special condition of the cession, and agrees to maintain over the commerce of other nations in this new acquisition — which could not be included in the agreements of any former treaty — the principles and collection of tariffs already established in the American customs.

ARTICLE III.

France reserves for herself absolutely all other territory adjacent to Louisiana, situated on the right bank of the Mississipi.[1]

ARTICLE IV.

The United States will pay to France, as the price of the cession mentioned in Article I, six million dollars.[2]

If you are willing to go this far, whatever may be the present feelings and the effect of the prejudices — without foundation, I believe — engendered by the Santo Domingo affair, where it was believed that your nation was more favorable to the blacks than to the whites,[3] I do not despair of success. And it is certainly better than the danger of casting back your people, so justly proud of their independence, under the claws of the British leopard and of making yourselves instruments of the power or vengeance of your former oppressors, who will never be to you but false, deceitful, and disdainful friends.

You see, Mr. President, that I speak to you with the freedom of a man whom you honor with your friend-

[1] Note that Du Pont, up to this point, has discussed and favored the cession of New Orleans and East and West Florida, not Louisiana.

[2] The total price paid for all of Louisiana was fifteen millions.

[3] That is, to the revolutionists rather than the French. See notes on previous letter.

ship. It is infinitely dear to me. It is by real favors that I wish to deserve its continuation.

With this in mind, I have thought of making in Paris the payments of those funds which the United States may owe to certain Frenchmen, as a means of still further raising your credit and of announcing the kindly feeling, the spirit of intercourse and ties which I think likely to favor your negotiations.

With regard to this matter, my son will explain all my ideas. I have none which is not to the reciprocal advantage of both nations; and what I can find personally agreeable and useful is not an objection in your eyes [pour votre coeur].

Allow me to impose upon your kindness in behalf of *La Fayette* who has been reduced to two hundred dollars income and who owes seventy-five thousand in the United States for which he spent more than a hundred and fifty thousand of his former fortune.

By paying his debts, your country will not reimburse him by a half of the amount which its liberty cost him, and it will pay almost no money except in the country itself and to its own citizens.

I send you my best wishes and deepest regards.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

WASHINGTON, *Feb* 1, 1803

M. Dupont [1]

DEAR SIR

I have to acknolege the receipt of your favors of Aug. 16 [2] and Oct. 4. And the latter I received with peculiar satisfaction; because while it holds up terms which cannot be entirely yielded, it proposes such as a mutual spirit of accommodation and sacrifice of opinion, may bring to some point of union. While we were preparing on this subject such modifications of the propositions of your letter of Oct. 4. as we could assent to, an event happened which obliged us to adopt measures of urgency. The suspension of the right of deposit at New Orleans, ceded to us by our treaty with Spain, threw our whole country into such a ferment as imminently threatened it's peace. This however was believed to be the act of the Intendant, unauthorized by his government. But it showed the necessity of making effectual arrangements to secure the peace of the two countries against the indiscreet acts of subordinate agents. The urgency of the case, as well as the public spirit therefore induced us to make a more solemn appeal to the justice and judgment of our neighbors, by sending a minister extraordinary to impress them with the necessity of

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Ford ed.), VIII, 203–08. This letter was sent by Monroe and left open for Livingston's perusal before being delivered. See Jefferson's *Writings* (Memorial ed.), X, 354.

[2] Letter not discovered.

some arrangement. Mr. Monroe has been selected. His good dispositions cannot be doubted. Multiplied conversations with him, and views of the subject taken in all the shapes in which it can present itself, have possessed him with our estimates of every thing relating to it, with a minuteness which no written communication to Mr. Livingston could ever have attained. These will prepare them to meet and decide on every form of proposition which can occur, without awaiting new instructions from hence, which might draw to an indefinite length a discussion where circumstances imperiously oblige us to a prompt decision. For the occlusion of the Mississippi is a state of things in which we cannot exist. He goes, therefore, joined with Chancellor Livingston, to aid in the issue of a crisis the most important the U.S. have ever met since their independence & which is to decide their future character & career. The confidence which the government of France reposes in you will undoubtedly give great weight to your information. An equal confidence on our part, founded on your knoledge of the subject, your just views of it, your good dispositions towards this country, and my long experience of your personal faith and friendship, assures me that you will render between us all the good offices in your power. The interests of the two countries being absolutely the same as to this matter, your aid may be conscientiously given. It will

often perhaps be possible for you, having a freedom of communication, *omnibus horis*, which diplomatic gentlemen will be excluded from by forms, to smooth difficulties by representations & reasonings which would be received with more suspicion from them. You will thereby render great good to both countries. For our circumstances are so imperious as to admit of no delay as to our course; and the use of the Mississippi so indispensable, that we cannot hesitate one moment to hazard our existence for it's maintenance. If we fail in this effort to put it beyond the reach of accident, we see the destinies we have to run, and prepare at once for them. Not but that we shall still endeavor to go on in peace and friendship with our neighbors as long as we can, *if our rights of navigation & deposit are respected;* but as we foresee that the caprices of the local officers, and the abuse of those rights by our boatmen & navigators, which neither government can prevent, will keep up a state of irritation, which cannot long be kept inactive, we should be criminally improvident not to take at once eventual measures for strengthening ourselves for the contest. It may be said, if this object be so all-important to us, why do we not offer such a sum as would insure its purchase? The answer is simple. We are an agricultural people, poor in money, and owing great debts. These will be falling due by instalments for 15. years to come, and require from us the

practice of a rigorous economy to accomplish their paiment: and it is our principle to pay to a moment whatever we have engaged, and never to engage what we cannot, and mean not faithfully to pay. We have calculated our resources and find the sum to be moderate which they would enable us to pay, and we know from late trials that little can be added to it by borrowing. The country too which we wish to purchase, except the portion already granted, and which must be confirmed to the private holders, is a barren sand 600. miles from East to West & from 30. to 40. & 50. miles from North to South, formed by deposition of the sands by the gulph stream in it's circular course round the Mexican gulph, and which being spent after performing a semicircle, has made from its last depositions the sand bank of East Florida. In West Florida indeed, there are on the borders of the rivers some rich bottoms, formed by the mud brought from the upper country. These bottoms are all possessed by individuals. But the spaces between river and river are mere banks of sand: and in East Florida there are neither rivers nor consequently any bottoms. We cannot then make any thing by a sale of the lands to individuals. So that it is peace alone which makes it an object with us, and which ought to make the session of it desirable to France. Whatever power, other than ourselves, holds the country east of the

Mississippi becomes our natural enemy. Will such a possession do France as much good, as such an enemy may do her harm? And how long would it be hers, were such an enemy, situated at its door, added to G. Britain? I confess, it appears to me as essential to France to keep at peace with us, as it is to us to keep at peace with her: and that if this cannot be secured without some compromise as to the territory in question, it will be useful for both to make some sacrifice to effect the compromise.

You see, my good friend, with what frankness I communicate with you on this subject, that I hide nothing from you, and that I am endeavoring to turn our private friendship to the good of our respective countries. And can private friendship ever answer a nobler end than by keeping two nations at peace, who, if this new position which one of them is taking, were rendered innocent, have more points of common interest, and fewer of collision, than any two on earth; who become natural friends, instead of natural enemies, which this change of position would make them. My letters of Apr. 25. May 5. and this present one have been written, without any disguise, in this view; and while safe in your hands they can never do anything but good. But you and I are now at that time of life when our call to another state of being cannot be distant, and may be near. Besides, your government is

in the habit of seizing papers without notice. These letters might thus get into hands, which like the hornet which extracts poison from the same flower that yields honey to the bee, might make them the ground of blowing up a flame between our two countries, and make our friendship and confidence in each other effect exactly the reverse of what we are aiming at. Being yourself thoroughly possessed of every idea in them, let me ask from your friendship an immediate consignment of them to the flames. That alone can make all safe and ourselves secure.

I intended to have answered you here, on the subject of your agency in transacting what money matters we may have at Paris, and for that purpose meant to have conferred with Mr. Gallatin.[1] But he has, for 2. or 3. days, been confined to his room, and is not yet able to do business. If he is out before Mr. Monroe's departure, I will write an additional letter on that subject. Be assured that it will be a great additional satisfaction to me to render services to yourself & sons by the same acts which shall at the same time promote the public service. Be so good as to present my respectful salutations to Made. Dupont, & to accept yourself assurances of my constant and affectionate friendship and great respect.

TH: JEFFERSON.

[1] Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury.

WASHINGTON, *November* 1, 1803

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

MY DEAR SIR,

Your favors of Apr. 6. & June 27. were duly received,[2] & with the welcome which every thing brings from you. The treaty which has so happily sealed the friendship of our two countries has been received here with general acclamation. Some inflexible federalists have still ventured to brave the public opinion. It will fix their character with the world & with posterity, who not descending to the other points of difference between us, will judge them by this fact, so palpable as to speak for itself in all times & places. For myself and my country I thank you for the aids you have given it,[3] & I congratulate you on having lived to give those aids in a transaction replete with blessings to unborn millions of men, & which will mark the face of a portion on the globe so extensive as that which now composes the United States of America. It is true that at this moment a little cloud hovers in the horizon. The government of Spain has protested against the right of France to transfer, & it is possible she may refuse possession, & that this may bring on acts of

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Memorial ed.), x, 422–24.

[2] These letters we have been unable to discover.

[3] Monroe wrote Jefferson, September 20, 1803, that he had earlier had doubts as to the value of the latter's correspondence with "certain characters" in France, but had concluded that "on the whole it was useful." He named Du Pont among others. *Writings* (S. M. Hamilton, ed., 1900), IV, 75–76.

force. But against such neighbors as France there, and the United States here what she can expect from so gross a compound of folly and false faith, is not to be sought in the book of wisdom. She is afraid of her enemies in Mexico. But not more than we are. Our policy will be to form New Orleans, & the country on both sides of it on the Gulf of Mexico, into a State; & as to all above that, to transplant our Indians into it, constituting them a Maréchaussée to prevent emigrants crossing the river, until we shall have filled up all the vacant country on this side. This will secure both Spain & us as to the mines of Mexico for half a century, and we may safely trust the provisions for that time to the men who shall live in it.

I have communicated with Mr. Gallatin on the subject of using your house in any matters of consequence we may have to do at Paris. He is impressed with the same desire I feel to give this mark of our confidence in you, and the sense we entertain of your friendship & fidelity. Mr. Behring informs him that none of the money which will be due from us to him as the assignee of France will be wanting at Paris. Be assured that our dispositions are such as to let no occasion pass unimproved of serving you, where occurrences will permit it. Present my respects to Mde. Dupont, and accept yourself assurances of my constant and warm friendship.

TH: JEFFERSON

V

PHILOSOPHER AND PRESIDENT

1804–1809

PARIS, 12 *Messidor, Year* XII, *July* 1, 1804

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

It seems useless for me to tell you how grieved I am that I am not yet able to return to you and the republic governed by your principles and wisdom.

But look upon Europe and my country, and what is happening to them. You know my feelings, my heart, my studies, my labors, and the philosophical hopes which have occupied my life.

I wish to give its last moments to the development of those institutions, my ideas of which you have been so good as to request of me in my outline on the education of the youth of America.

And perhaps, if that should seem useful to you, I would make an effort to contribute to the consolidation of the harmony between your old confederated states and the new nation which you have just admitted among them.

It is the only part of the United States whose language I know well; and not only that which is spoken, written, and taught in grammars, but that which is

thought, and felt, and comes from the soul, and influences the soul, and which is a part of national customs, habits, and feelings.

If there are not many of your former countrymen who can thus make themselves understood by the inhabitants of Louisiana, there are even fewer French in America, who know and love, as I do, the free institutions, the peaceful customs, the serious manners of your people, who are a mixture of English, Scotch, Dutch, Swiss, and Germans.

I conclude from that, inasmuch as your nation is kind and agreeable, I can also more than any other Frenchman be agreeable and useful to your nation when a French people happens to be involved.

That is one of my real ambitions.

But, in my zeal for my former country, I find that I made to the French government more than a year ago certain advances which it has not yet repaid; [1] and, whatever may be my hurry to return to America, reason compels me, who am a merchant and *pater familias*, not to leave until this account is settled.

As soon as it is, to my loss or my gain, I shall not delay in seeing the steeples of New York, the falls of the Brandy-Wine, and the Capitol of Washington.

[1] He had loaned the French legation in the United States 54,000 francs, in order to expedite the adoption of a plan whereby his company would be given an agency for supplying the French armies in the West Indies. See *Life of E. I. du Pont*, VIII, 47.

You have promised me your support and protection for my fine gunpowder factory, which has no equal in the two worlds.

Have you given it your saltpetre to refine and your gunpowder to [rebattre].

I beg your Excellency not to forget that it is a useful establishment which the zeal of my children created and which is conducted by my second son, the best pupil of the greatest chemist in Europe, and that it belongs to your friend.

Receive with your usual kindness my cordial greetings.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

PARIS, *May* 12, 1805

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

Your natural seriousness does not perhaps allow you to take as much pleasure in the medal awarded you by our Agricultural Society as I took in the homage rendered to the Philosopher-Statesman of your country by the planters of mine.[1]

[1] In 1805, the Society of Agriculture of the Department of the Seine awarded gold medals to men who had effected improvements in the plough. One of these went to Jefferson for the mouldboard "of least resistance" which he had designed several years before. It is described in the *Transactions* of the American Philosophical Society, IV (1799), No. XXXVIII, and in the *Annales du Museum national d'histoire naturelle* (1802), I, 322–331. For the awards, see *Mémoires*, Société d'agriculture, Dept. Seine, VII, xlix–lviii.

I often experience childhood joys, but on this occasion I experienced a more mature one, because it was a civic feeling which included my two countries, as well as my love for the two sciences of government and agriculture.

Both of them urge me to submit to you an idea which I think useful in bringing to an end the manifold litigations which exist in several of the United States and especially in Kentucky, concerning the ownership of land.[1] . . .

Accept my thanks for the trial I have given your patience and the expression of my deepest respect.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

Paris 21 *Fructidor* 13 (*Sept.* 8, 1805)

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

Mr. President,

Since the departure of Mr. Skipwith[2] gives me a definite opportunity to write to your Excellency, I take the liberty of joining to this letter the copies of those which I had the honor of sending to you on May 21[12] and August 27 [28].

[1] The lengthy discussion of the problem of land-titles which follows need not be reproduced here. Du Pont himself had 56,000 acres in Kentucky, representing an original subscription to his company, and was personally aware of the extensive litigation resulting from the overlapping of grants. He advocated a general survey at the expense of the claimants and such a reduction in claims as would be warranted after the ratio between the land actually available in a given district and that which had been granted had been ascertained.

[2] Fulwar Skipwith, American Commercial Agent at Paris.

The first of these letters outlines an idea which, I believe, may deserve your approval; namely, the idea for bringing to a close the litigation existing in Kentucky and other states, relative to the land-grants which overlap and the sum total of which exceeds the physical extent of the district in which these grants have been made.

The other [1] gives you an account of the error committed by Mr. *Armstrong* in the matter, important in itself, of the vessel, the *New Jersey*; in which Mr. *Armstrong*, who had no right to interfere, has, by his prejudices and his unjust obstinacy and by exceeding his powers, deprived his fellow citizens of nearly one hundred and sixty thousand dollars which the French courts had ordered restored to them and which the French minister would have had paid but for the incomprehensible opposition of the American minister.

This error is much more important than it seems to be, since it is not confined to the particular matter in which he has unjustly caused so great embarrassment, but since he has assumed on diplomatic grounds that the United States had no claim to make and intended to make no claim for the unjustifiable capture of its vessels, when these vessels had been insured *in the*

[1] Not printed in this volume. Gen. John Armstrong was American Minister to France, 1804–10. Any one interested in the case of the *New Jersey* can find papers relative to it, some of which contain references to Du Pont, in *Amer. State Papers, Foreign Relations*, II (1832), 774–75.

United States: which would leave to the French and English every liberty to violate your flag and to make away arbitrarily, on the high sea, with American goods which are never shipped without insuring them.

I think it indispensable for the honor and interest of your nation that your Excellency see to it that this so-called principle be officially and formally repudiated, which is both iniquitous and senseless and which would establish against the United States a law holding good only with regard to it; for no other nation would be willing to agree to submit to it.

I refer you to what I have had the honor of telling you about it in the enclosed letter.

I have now to renew my thanks to your Excellency for the justice which you have rendered to our powder factory and the protection you have been so kind as to afford it by making use of it for governmental supplies.[1]

And then, Mr. President, I have several explanations to offer to your friendship which is so precious to me and to your esteem which is no less so, concerning my

[1] Jefferson informed E. I. du Pont, November 23, 1804, that it had been concluded to be for the public interest to apply to his establishment for whatever could be had from it for the use of either the naval or military department, and that he would receive official applications in due time. See *Life of E. I. du Pont*, VII, 28. On March 8, 1805, E. I. du Pont thanked Jefferson for the expression of "the favorable dispositions of the government" relative to his manufacture. See Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress. Purchases by the government during Jefferson's administration, however, amounted to much less than the Du Ponts had expected. See *E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.*, p. 34.

sojourn in Europe, prolonged much more than I could wish.

It is easy for you to judge by the progress that despotism is making that this sojourn is extremely painful to me.

I need to be free, I need to be useful, I need to live with men of lofty feelings.

The political malady, prurient and gangrenous, by which Europe is attacked and which the tremendous bleedings about to be made will aggravate, instead of healing her, leave me no hope of satisfying henceforth in the old world these three needs so deeply rooted in my character and heart.

So in spite of the terrible inconvenience of never being able to speak or to write your language well, a thing which a person of sixty could not do satisfactorily, I am destined to consecrate whatever days God shall grant me to the United States and these may still be numerous enough (for I feel hale and hearty) and I should wish them to be full.

But I have already told you that a great duty toward the memory of Monsieur Turgot does not permit me to expose anew to the sea the papers which he has left me. I must needs give them to the country which he served so illustriously and valorously.[1]

[1] Du Pont's edition of Turgot's *Œuvres* was published in Paris, 1808–1811, in 9 vols. Apparently he had brought Turgot's papers to America with him, but did not care to do so again.

Then, as for you and your fellow citizens, I will not be a burden to your country and bring to it only my dead body. There would be in that neither dignity nor gratitude.

I have given you through my son, but not through myself, the perfected art of gunpowder, necessary for the defense of the state, for the destruction of predatory animals, for the construction of roads and canals through the mountains. I wish to give you the tannery which is still very imperfect in your country. This art, so closely related to agriculture, to which the vast number of your trees offers raw material better than that of our climates, is not one of those from which your nation ought to be deterred.

I shall return knowing the basic principles of the English method of manufacture of which we have an excellent establishment in Normandy, and those of the two French methods. By combining the theory and practice of these three methods of manufacture and by aiding ourselves through researches on your trees, we shall make the American method of manufacture superior to the three others.

Finally, I have to end my life by helping under your auspices in the organization of public education for which the plan that you asked of me won your approval.

After which I can die.

Meanwhile, and as long as I live, I wish to deserve your love as you have my love and respect.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

WASHINGTON *Feb.* 12. 06

Mr. Dupont de Nemours

DEAR SIR

Mr. Skipwith's return to Paris furnishes me an opportunity of acknoleging the receipt of your letters of Apr. 22. 29. May. 12. Aug. 27. Sep. 8. In that of May 12. you mention in general terms a notice taken by the society of Agriculture of a mouldboard of my construction: and I saw some details on that subject in the newspapers, which I should have paid no attention to but for the credit it derives from your mention. The fear that some notice on that subject might have been addressed to me and miscarried, & an imputation arise of a want of respect on my part to that society of which I am incapable, induces me to observe to you that I have no information on the subject but that from the newspapers & from yourself: and to pray you to cover me from blame if I should have been in the case of incurring it.[1] Having lately been informed that our ploughmen would prefer a mouldboard with a sharp toe, I have shewn them that this is made with equal

[1] Jefferson's official notice from the Society seems to have been delayed. A letter in regard to it was written him by M. Silvestre, August 8, 1806, and he acknowledged the medal and the memoirs which accompanied it, May 29, 1807.

ease on the same principle as that with a square toe. By Mr. Skipwith I sent you a box containing a model of each, which in my present uncertainty of what has passed on this subject with the society of Agriculture, I must pray you to dispose of as your better information & friendship to me will enable you best to do. The sharp toe enables them to shorten the plough by several inches, as it laps further on the share.

I sent M. Briot's letter to the Philosophical society, having as you are sensible, no time to give to objects of that nature. Since Orleans has been established under a government of it's own, it's legislature has begun a scheme for an academy, & I suppose Congress will endow it with lands. I apprised Govr. Claiborne of the advantages the institution would derive from placing you at it's head. He is fully sensible of it, and will pay due attention to it when the scheme is advanced to maturity.

I had hoped that the matter in which our differences with Spain had been terminated (in which we experienced your good dispositions) would have secured us a long peace with her. On the contrary it has been the epoch of a regenerated spirit of hostility, probably excited by an agent of hers here. We are making one effort more to preserve peace, to which we are not led by any apprehensions that we should lose in a contest with her.

I am in hopes the Eleutherian mills go on well. It is lately ascertained that the supplies of saltpetre which the Western country can furnish are immensely beyond what had been expected. A single cave is known which would supply us for the whole term of a war. The caves are numerous. But a more important discovery has been made: that there are immense precipices of a soft sandy rock, which pulverised yields about 20. lbs. of salt petre to the bushel, whereas the earth of the Caves yields but 1 lb. to the bushel. Your son is setting out on a visit to that country to inform himself from his own view of the subject. The purpose of publishing the works of Turgot, which detains you in France, is a very legitimate one. We shall be doubly happy therefore on your return, as, with yourself, it will give us the valuable work you have edited. I send you a pamphlet written here, in which the British doctrine, that a commerce not open to Neutrals in peace shall not be pursued by them in war, is logically & unanswerably refuted. I wish it may be well translated into French. Present my respectful remembrances to Madame Dupont & accept yourself assurances of my constant attachment & great respect.

TH: JEFFERSON

PARIS, *May* 6, 1807

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

I have the honor to send you a small collection of memoirs, or rather two copies of this collection. One is for you; the other, for the philosophical society.

The edition of M. Turgot's works is not yet done and delays the time when I can bring to your republic the tribute of my zeal and of my last labors.

As a faithful American and unchanging friend of liberty, I dare to offer to your wisdom the suggestion of increasing your defenses. I see from statistics which have been published that you have not enough cannons or guns. These last can be bought in Europe. You have copper mines. Have them exploited and cast your cannons. War of today is made by the artillery.

With good reason have you thought of *militarising* further a part of your militia. Turn all your attention to doing that: let not patriotic courage be a thing apart from the science of tactics and from that facility in the handling of arms which adds confidence.

A good militia is not a formidable thing to liberty. It is not won away from its allegiance: it is not led to civil wars like standing armies.

But it can be and must be put in the position to withstand on equal terms first, advantageously and glori-

4108

ously next, a series of fights against regular troops, even numerous and powerful ones.

The artillery is indispensable, and likewise its mobility. Its position may be decisive. But it must have an excellent infantry for its support in order that it may not be swept away.

If war were to come to your land before you are able to get a sufficient quantity of good guns, a third can be spared and there can be formed a very formidable infantry by giving guns only to the best marksmen and making the third rank of pikesmen whose arms cost almost nothing and project by a foot or a foot and a half beyond the first bayonets. The use of one's fire is not lost, because only practised hands have it in charge, and in the crossing of steel the advantage of its length is gained.

It is terrible to have to think of those things. But how would the flock be saved if wolves could not be opposed by faithful, trained, and fearless dogs?

Aaron Burr's baseness and madness make me shudder.[1]

Your courage against England is an honor to you.[2]

[1] Burr's trial, on the charge of treason in levying war against the United States, began May 22, 1807. He had been arrested and committed before the date of this letter.

[2] American rights were being infringed upon by the British in their struggle against Napoleon, though not so flagrantly as after the date of this letter. Jefferson's foes accused him of taking stronger tone against the British than the French, but credited him with little courage.

Continue to be independent to the rest of the world. Your nation and your native land are an asylum and hope for the entire world.

Regards and respects.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

It is a consolation for me to know that my son at *Eleutherian Mill* can contribute efficaciously to your defense.

I seriously regret that his brother did not from the start concentrate his efforts on agriculture; and that circumstances took me to Europe. But that will not be for always.

Washington, *July* 14, 1807

M. Dupont de Nemours[1]

My Dear Sir

I received last night your letter of May 6. and a vessel being just now sailing from Baltimore affords me an opportunity of hastily acknoleging it. Your exhortation to make a provision of arms is undoubtedly wise, and we have not been inattentive to it. Our internal resources for cannon, are great, and those for small arms considerable, & in full emploiment. We shall not suffer from that want, should we have war: and of the possibility of that you will judge by the enclosed procla-

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Ford ed.), IX, 110–12.

mation,[1] & by what you know of the character of the English government. Never, since the battle of Lexington have I seen this country in such a state of exasperation as at present: and even that did not produce such unanimity. The federalists themselves coalesce with us as to the object, tho' they will return to their trade of censuring every measure taken to obtain it. "Reparation for the past, and security for the future," is our motto; but whether the English will yield it freely, or will require resort to non-intercourse, or to war, is yet to be seen. We prepare for the last. We have actually 2000. men in the field, employed chiefly in covering the exposed coast, & cutting off all supply to the British vessels. We think our gunboats at New York, (32) with heavy batteries along shore, & bombs, will put that city *hors d'insulte*. If you could procure & send me a good description & drawing of one of your Prames, you would do me a most acceptable service. I suppose them to be in fact a floating battery rendered very manageable by oars.

Burr's conspiracy has been one of the most flagitious of which history will ever furnish an example. He had combined the objects of separating the western States from us, of adding Mexico to them, & of placing himself at their head. But he who could expect to effect

[1] Presumably his proclamation of July 2, 1807, following the firing on the American frigate *Chesapeake* by the British frigate *Leopard*, which might easily have led to war. *Writings* (Ford ed.), IX, 89–99.

such objects by the aid of American citizens, must be perfectly ripe for Bedlam. Yet altho' there is not a man in the U.S. who is not satisfied of the depth of his guilt, such are the jealous provisions of our law in favor of the accused & against the accuser, that I question if he can be convicted. Out of 48 jurors who are to be summoned, he has a right to choose the 12 who are to try him, and if any one of the 12 refuses to concur in finding him guilty, he escapes. This affair has been a great confirmation in my mind of the innate strength of the form of our government. He had probably induced near a thousand men to engage with him, by making them believe the government connived at it. A proclamation alone, by undeceiving them, so compleatly disarmed him, that he had not above 30 men left, ready to go all lengths with him. The first enterprise was to have been the seizure of N. Orleans, which he supposed would powerfully bridle the country above, & place him at the door of Mexico. It has given me infinite satisfaction, that not a single native Creole of Louisiana, and but one American settled there before the delivery of the country to us, were in his interest. His partizans there were made up of fugitives from justice or from their debts who had flocked there from other parts of the U.S., after the delivery of the country, and of adventurers & speculators of all descriptions. I thank you for the volume of memoires

you have sent me, & will immediately deliver that for the Phil. Society. I feel a great interest in the publication of Turgot's works, but quite as much in your return here. Your Eleutherian son is very valuable to us & will daily become more so. I hope there will be a reaction of good offices on him. We have heard of a great improvement in France of the furnace for heating cannon balls, but we can get no description of it.

I salute you with sincere affection, & add assurances of the highest respect.

TH: JEFFERSON

(PARIS,) *August* 13, 1807

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

I do not let an opportunity pass to write to you when I think I can do so with safety.

It is a keen disappointment to me, if you persist in your unwillingness to be re-elected.[1] I think you are still more useful to your country by remaining at the head of its government than you were as an instrument in its declaration of independence, which may become more difficult to maintain than it was to establish.

How can you think, in such a situation, of retiring?

[1] For a statement of Jefferson's attitude toward this question about this time, see his letter to Wm. Short, May 19, 1807, *Writings* (Ford ed.), IX, 50–51.

You are three whole years younger than I am, and I still feel capable of serving my brothers for ten more years.

My noble friend, let us die on our feet.

If it is still possible for you to withdraw that discouraging resolution of retreat, let it be known and remain; for the matter is worthy of you. There will be danger.

If it is absolutely too late for you to hold your position, let us weep. But exert some influence in the matter of the choice of your successor; and give the first place to character, virtue, patriotism, courage, let these take precedence over talents and intelligence. Republics are maintained by stubbornness, bold resolution, by the art of inspiring them in its citizens, an art which is the fruit of stern and honest endeavor, rather than by learned combinations.

Nevertheless, as long as you are the executive power and have some influence over your legislative body, neglect no one of them.

Create an artillery. It is dreadful to think of your lack in this matter.

One of large calibre for the defense of important posts is not to be despised. But these posts are attacked indirectly or their seizure is postponed when a country is subdued. So it is the light and easily moved artillery, whose positions can be changed quickly and at will,

which makes for the safety of the state, because it follows its defenders everywhere.

Create a navy if you still have time.

Train and drill your militia so that you can make of it, if need be, a good and fairly numerous army, and also so that you can, by recruiting this army after each loss that it might experience, keep it constantly at maximum strength. Soldiers may be killed: as long as war lasts, the army must be immortal.

There is neither liberty nor independence assured to a country whose militia is not skilled in arms and drill, and cannot, when it is attacked, receive from its government a good and sufficient artillery.

If you have any malleable iron, it is more lasting than bronze and makes good cannons. But both need mills for casting, turning, and boring. Have some made promptly; and meanwhile, buy wherever you can what you find for sale.

I am told that you have taken measures for forming a corps of thirty thousand volunteers. That is very good.

I wish that you could bring it to fifty thousand, which seems to me should make a sufficient army if, as I said just now, this army is an immortal troop; which it will be, if the militia, well drilled, always furnishes necessary substitutes and covers besides positions of easy defense, thus always relieving and renewing the active army.

I do not believe that you need more than eight thousand cavalrymen, because since you can be attacked only by European powers, there is no likelihood that they can transport across the Atlantic many horses to your shores. Of these eight thousand men you would need four thousand for the *gendarmerie*, or heavy-armed cavalry with breastplates for armor: armor for the back is good for nothing: the other four thousand must be the light-armed cavalry.

If you conclude a treaty with England, weigh well the conditions and make them binding. You were absolutely right in not consenting to her so-called right to board and search your vessels for sailors whom she would claim to be English, who are very difficult to distinguish, and whom the flag of an independent power ought to protect even if they should be deserters. There is no more reason for seeking them or using their police power on your bridges or under your hatches than in your cities and in your fields.

If the English government, which seems to me to be very strange today and very unreasonable in intervening in opinions expressed in its own country and in setting yours at defiance, should fall into the bitter folly of making war on you, seize the opportunity immediately of taking possession of Canada and never give it up; make yourself beloved by it.

If England, more reasonably, should agree to cede it

to you, amicably in your treaty, seize the opportunity. For it is only by way of Canada that there can be made against you a dangerous attack, by means of a powerful army aided by a hostile population and sufficiently provisioned.

An attack through Louisiana and the Floridas would fail because of supplies and roads.

One by New York would cause great and dreadful destruction in a lovely land. I do not believe it would be definitely successful. But still you must be prepared to repel it. You have, *á propos* of this, M. de Pusy's excellent plan.[1]

In its present condition, New York would be destroyed without difficulty by a fleet of ten vessels, Jersey invaded, and Philadelphia pillaged or burned by an expeditionary force of twenty-five thousand men who then would be repulsed and annihilated.

But through Canada you might have to deal with eighty thousand men easily recruited and fed very well by the country of their entry. And if your military supplies were not long before entirely prepared, you might be conquered at any moment. Unfortunately you would not need any other Aaron Burrs already sold or for sale.

When I get back, I shall show you how to clothe, arm, and use your troops in order that they may be

[1] See Du Pont's letter of November 8, 1800, above.

more formidable and less expensive than those of Europe. That would be too much to write; and besides one needs visible example and trial.

I cannot leave before a year. The duty which I have to fulfil and of which I have spoken to you, although advanced in its execution, still requires that time. Shortly after my arrival in the United States, I shall go and see you. I hope and desire to find you still in your present position. Then whatever wisdom I may have and what is left of my "old blood" will be at the service of your liberty and that of your country.

I will not sign my letter. You know my hand: and I trust you know my heart.

Vale, Perge, et me semper ama.

WASHINGTON *May* 2. 1808

Mr. Dupont de Nemours

MY DEAR SIR

Your letters constantly announcing an early return to us, have prevented my writing to you, and even now I do it rather in the hope that this will not find you at Paris. Under this uncertainty and knowing the interest you take in our affairs, I will only briefly say that during the present paroxysm of the insanity of Europe, we have thought it wisest to break off all intercourse with her.[1] We shall in the course of this year have all

[1] The Embargo had gone into effect.

our seaports of any note put into a state of defence against naval attacks. Against great land armies we cannot attempt it but by equal armies. For these we must depend on a classified militia, which will give us the service of the class from 20. to 26. in the nature of conscripts, composing a body of about 250,000. to be specially trained. This measure attempted at a former session, was pressed at the last, and might I think have been carried by a small majority. But considering that great innovations should never be forced on slender majorities, and seeing that the public opinion is sensibly rallying to it, it was thought better to let it tie over to the next session, when I think it will be passed. Another measure has now twice failed, which I have warmly urged, the immediate settlement, by donation of lands, of such a body of militia, in the territories of Orleans & Mississippi, as will be adequate to the defence of New Orleans. We are raising some regulars, in addition to our present force, for garrisoning our seaports, & forming a Nucleus for the militia to gather to.

There will be no question who is to be my successor.[1] Of this be assured, whatever may be said by newspapers & private correspondencies. Local considera-

[1] Madison was Jefferson's personal choice, though the latter preserved strict impartiality between him and Monroe. See letter to Monroe, *Writings* (Ford ed.), IX, 177. Madison's election was assured before the full effect of the Embargo in wrecking the popularity of the administration had been manifested.

tions have been silenced by those dictated by the continued difficulties of the times. A public vessel going to France & England monthly during our embargo; for the purposes of correspondence, will give safe opportunities of conveying letters. but I would rather say "*Nil mihi rescribas, attamen ipse veni.*" Present me respectfully to Made. Dupont, and accept the assurances of my constant & sincere friendship.

TH: JEFFERSON

PARIS, *May* 25, 1808

To his Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

SIR,

Although I doubt in no way that Mr. Madison who has so much and such good sense and who has been so long the companion of your labors, will govern according to the same principles as your Excellency and will follow in your footsteps; I cannot keep from deeply regretting the decision you have made not to take advantage of the eligibility which the laws of your country give you, and to give up the presidency.[1]

The reason you gave is a most delicate and noble one; it is certainly very good, as a rule, not to encourage life-long tenure of an office; and in this matter, the example must be set by the most worthy, for the others would not set it. But when the safety, the

[1] For Jefferson's answer to the petitions that he stand for reëlection, see H. S. Randall, *Life of Thomas Jefferson* (1858), III, 252.

political existence, and the independence of the state may be threatened, it becomes so important to keep at the helm long experience and courage tempered by great events that it is very difficult for any officer to be able to equal in worth those still strong old men who saw the Republic born and who had an active part in its birth.

You did well to say that if war should take place you would again become a candidate.[1] An immediate war is not to be feared, but it still threatens and is formidable. Your country is not safe and will not be safe, as long as Canada is not united to it; as long as you have not a powerful, numerous, and mobile artillery; as long as your copper and malleable iron mines, or those made malleable by chemical processes, are not exploited and that too with this end in view; as long as your militia is not daily drilled and completely armed with guns of such a calibre that the same cartridges may be used in them from Maine to Louisiana; as long as you have not in your armories the means for doubling this armament, for you must expect, and without trembling, that, a war occurring against troops seasoned by long fights, the best militia, in its

[1] We have been unable to discover such a statement in Jefferson's published writings. He wrote John Taylor, January 6, 1805, that only the danger of the succession of a monarchist, which he regarded as impossible, would gain his acquiescence in another election. *Writings* (Memorial ed.), XI, 56–57.

first campaign, sometimes in its second, will often lose a part of its arms; and especially, my noble friend, as long as your young men are not shaped by a general education, by civil and military habits, by good little classic books, studied, learned, copied, sung, and aiming even toward the dances of childhood, animating those of youth and manhood, which out of respect for law, out of love for justice, of zeal for liberty, of the most heroic devotion for country, make *a Religion.*

That is not done, nor perhaps is it ready to be done. It must be hoped that God will provide it. If half of the good which would seem indispensable remains undone, we must take some consolation in the idea that on the other hand half of the evil that could happen never does happen.

Still we must see both, and that too in every detail; we must act as if the first were to be done immediately and as if the second hung over our heads.

Use your spare time for this, since it will no longer be your administration. It is fitting that on the eve of his death Jefferson worked for America and the world, just as if he were twenty years old. Old age is made for mediocrity. Water kept too long stagnates, but good wine is still improving at its hundredth year.

I shall ask you to manage it so that, either through you or your respected successor, the captains of the cartel-ships (*parlementaires*) which the United States

will surely send from time to time be given orders to take me on board as soon as I am free. I have not yet finished the work which I owe to the shade of M. Turgot. Only four volumes are printed. I judge from what remains of the material, superior perhaps to that already used, that there will be at least three others. That done, I shall cry quits with the old world; and my wishes, my steps shall turn toward him to whom I can be of some use; where liberty can be lasting; where my children are settled; where my grandsons will never be exposed to killing men except in defense of their country: to kill by an arbitrary order, to kill like an executioner and like an executioner of the innocent — what is worse — seems to me the most horrible and vilest of crimes. I wish no Du Pont to be sullied by this. . . .

My best wishes and unchanging affection.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

My wife asks me to remember her to you. . . .

PARIS, *July* 23, 1808

To his Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

I gratefully received your letter of May 22,[1] which crossed the one I had the honor to write you the 25th of the same month.

[1] Probably Jefferson's letter of May 2, above.

This last letter of mine pointed out to your Excellency what I believe to be indispensable to the political safety of your Country.[1] . . .

To this I shall also add today the necessity of getting the Floridas,[2] not for their wealth (since their land is barren), not to prevent an attack in this quarter, for a European army could not cross its deserts and go up its rivers; but to keep frigates and privateers from Saint Augustine from closing the Mississipi [*sic*], and thus allowing your western states, which have no other outlet but this river, to be cut off.

It is impossible not to see that present circumstances must offer several means of adding these provinces to the United States by a treaty or by a voluntary union. Depending upon events, it may happen that the inhabitants consider themselves masters and desire this union, and a small amount of money given or lent would make this still easier. Religion is not an obstacle in your government, since (as every one knows) it respects and protects all religions.

The only thing of importance to you in this matter is for the Floridas not to belong to any European and

[1] Several paragraphs, repeating the arguments of the letter of May 25, are omitted.

[2] The acquisition of West Florida was a very important objective of Jefferson's policy, but did not come about until the administration of Madison, under circumstances not dissimilar to those hypothetically described by Du Pont. See I. J. Cox, *The West Florida Controversy* (1918), passim.

maritime power. If any Europeans, whoever they may be, should take possession of them, there should be no hesitation in ejecting them within the year; declaring that it is only for the safety of the United States, and offering in its name all amends, every compensation, and every reasonable indemnity, even being generous in the matter of this indemnity: declaring that the possession that you are now taking in your turn, with a force sufficiently large to prevent all resistance, would result from no hostile attitude, that you would not regard it as a war, the very idea of which is contrary to your constitution and your maxims, but only as an indispensable precaution in order that foreigners may not have the means to sow the seed of dread division among you.

If Mexico becomes an independent power, which is again possible and very probable, you will have to agree with it, and that too amicably, upon your southern boundaries, leaving no pretext or reason for a future break; for it will be, of all powers, the one with whom you will need most to be friends; and in these first moments, it must be well inclined.

Just now America is *a new world* in which your nation has carried and will keep principles of liberty which some day will help heal the ills of the *old world.*

A war with Europe seems to me somewhat less immediately threatening. But that is no reason for

neglecting to prepare yourself to go through with one. You must not forget that unless Europe changes her principles, this war will be inevitable.[1] . . .

I am not at all of the opinion that during the interruption of your commerce you should urge your people toward any manufacturing which is not absolutely necessary for your defense. Your commerce cannot always be suspended. Some day it will resume its natural course; trade will return to the fittest, and the capital used for the majority of the new industries would be lost. If it were not, and if too large a number of these industries could be maintained, that would be, in your position, a still more serious evil.[2] . . .

You have everything to think of: war, finance, politics, diplomacy. And as for these, you must still believe that inhabitants of a republic in general, and your people in particular, are less suited for diplomacy than those nations which have courts. Do not envy them this advantage; make up for it. There are in this case resources of magnanimity and good faith. When one is not shrewd, one must be generous, and not bargain much: generosity is also cunning. Again you have an inconvenience which bears on your foreign relations: you are too far from Europe to receive an

[1] Several paragraphs, dealing with the question of preparedness as in other letters, are omitted.

[2] Several obscure and technical paragraphs dealing with methods of taxation are omitted.

accurate idea of it. Europe is very changeable: when any news reaches you, it is already a long time passed; and, for what concerns it, your political activities must occur late.

However, my respected friend, I applaud you loudly, because it is a measure of that lofty wisdom for which I revere you as much as I love you for your virtues: I applaud you for perceiving that you could not dispense with incurring, in the matter of preparations, the same expenses and using the same time, whether you prolong peace or whether you decide on war; for perceiving that in peace you would make them with more economy and care, that you could not make them without borrowing, that you would better borrow, and more easily too, and at a better rate on your peace credit than on your war credit; and I applaud you for having decided, therefore, in place of entering upon hostilities, to sacrifice temporarily fifteen-sixteenths of your public income in order to keep up negotiations: [1] and no other nation would have thought of that. I think that this will be a real financial economy without counting that of human blood which a philosopher and republican, such as you are, considers of no small account.

I regret that you have not yet actively begun the

[1] He is probably referring to the Embargo, which greatly reduced the income of the government from customs duties.

public education of your nation, for which you have given your approval to my ideas. National education cannot begin too soon, for it is only when that has been in progress for twelve or fifteen years according to wisely joined, reasonable, philosophic, and patriotic principles, that the nation and state can be considered solidly constituted, the social knot well tied in every spirit and heart. When one wishes to have citizens, one must make them.

Although your successor must be your friend, how could he flatter himself that he will follow your plans as you would have done yourself? He will have his own. I regret your retirement for your country's sake, and the great influence that you can maintain. I regret it also for my own sake and for the services which I hoped to render your nation — in peace or war, for I have carefully studied the two sciences, both necessary for a statesman. But a *young president* will take me for a dotard. I am three years older than you.

Why did I not come back sooner and why can I not leave again? I have already told you. I had a great debt to pay to the memory of Monsieur Turgot; and the publication of his writings was also a debt to mankind.

As long as I thought it possible to make his principles win out in practice, I stood by my task and thought it more important to rule than to write.

After the overthrow of our republic on the 18th of Fructidor of the Year V, when I crossed over to America, I hoped to found there a colony, a *Pontiania*,[1] and even that entered into my duty toward Monsieur Turgot.

Most of those who had subscribed toward furnishing me with funds for this received no returns. The zeal and trust of my elder son in all that seemed to be of service to his old country lost the rest; and nought is left to me to save the principal of my associates, while sacrificing almost my entire personal fortune, but the very great success of my second son's powder factory. So you can imagine my hurry to rejoin this excellent young man and to find myself again in a country where I may still be of use, for even if I do not know English well (which is a great inconvenience), I am not ignorant of the language of reason and liberty (which is an advantage).

But having no surety of just how much I may be listened to or disregarded by a nation that is not my own, that may even have against mine rather just suspicions, running the risk of no longer being anything but an "old gentleman" [*sic*], an ignorant old man of letters, living only for his family, without interest for the world, I surely had no right to expose for

[1] See Introduction. The name "Pontiania" is obviously derived from Du Pont's own name.

the third time the precious papers of Monsieur Turgot to the waves of the Atlantic. It is already too much to have saved them from it twice. If I drown hereafter, I must drown all alone. So the work is now in the press. I have already printed five volumes, three or four more still to print. To finish this task, that is my job. Then I shall be able to give some attention to myself.

If we are then *disappointed* in our hopes, as we must expect, we shall lose a great happiness and a sweet illusion; but we shall have received a good lesson in philosophy, and with advancing age, we shall leave the world to *God* to whom centuries are of little moment and who knows full well that mankind will always spread its light and will arrive sooner or later at some degree of knowledge and morality, which will cover the earth with men as happy and as mutually helpful as their natures can allow.

It is our *youthful* impatience which would like for these beautiful days to come tomorrow. Poor ants, let us be satisfied with having brought our grain of millet to the hive, and let us die hunting for another.

I send you my tenderest greetings.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

My wife is deeply appreciative of your thoughts of her. She esteems and respects you as much as I do myself.[1] . . .

[1] An unimportant postscript written in the margin is omitted.

PARIS, 5.7*me.* 1808
[*Sept.* 5, 1808]

To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States

MR. PRESIDENT,

I think that today is the last time I shall be able to write you with complete frankness. For I shall certainly refrain from intrusting letters of any importance to Mr. Armstrong [1] who would open them, withhold them if he should not deliver them, denounce them at least through imprudence or lack of common sense if not through deliberate meanness and perversity of spirit. If I have to die some day for the liberty of your country, I certainly do not want this to be in a cell where I should be of no good.

I am somewhat reassured concerning the foreign dangers which the United States seemed to me to have to incur, since I see the difficulty which arises in conquering a neighboring and continental nation when it does not wish to be conquered: [2] which must cause to be postponed the idea of going and looking for another across the sea and distant twelve hundred leagues.

You are more hated than the Spanish and Austrians, because you are more enlightened and free: thus setting a much worse and more dangerous example for people

[1] See note on letter of September 8, 1805.

[2] He is apparently referring to the difficulties of the French in their attempt to conquer Spain, which rendered any attack on the United States by France unlikely. He writes, not as a French patriot, but as a liberal internationalist who by this time thoroughly distrusted Napoleon. Whether or not his hypotheses are credible is a question.

whose empire is not one of reason. So you could have and ought to have been attacked before those two nations which were already in the hollow of our hand and from which no resistance was feared.

You certainly would have been, either in concert with England if she had been willing to accede to it, or as soon as England was put down or bound by a treaty in which she would have given up Canada. That was the natural plan, if a mistake had not occurred on the way. And you certainly will be, just as soon as England is brought to the same view. It will not be she who will wish to invade you through Canada. She tried it in vain when you were three times weaker than you now are; and she has learned from experience that you are more useful to her power by your commerce than by your submission. Then there will be found in conquering your nation the advantage which has always been envisaged, viz., that of destroying a flourishing republic, and then of conquering Mexico more easily.

These views, concerning the road to Mexico through the United States, become of much more interest since Mexico was lost through the desire of taking Spain by force, when the complete accord of her weak monarch was enjoyed without effort.[1]

[1] Mexican independence was not yet achieved. The overthrow of Ferdinand VII of Spain and the accession of Joseph Napoleon, however, created great discontent in Mexico and was followed by intermittent revolutionary movements.

So what you have now to fear and to repel if the thing takes place is an invasion of the Floridas, which can occur by means of an expedition of five or six vessels and four or five thousand men, an expedition of adventurers, so to speak. If a great power were established in the Floridas, it would not need to be more feared in its attempt to conquer you, for the rivers cannot be navigated, the plains are too barren (Pine Barrens), and there is nothing for an army to live on. But it could, even with undermanned vessels, close the Missipi [*sic*], and, by putting a stop to the commerce of your western states, bring about a split which would cut your republic in two, cast you into the midst of a civil war, and leave no increase possible except to those of your states which, having a minimum of intelligence [lumières?], love freedom the least and would most easily be tempted by the vainglories of a monarchy, by feudal institutions, by the pleasure of commanding slaves, by a mixture of vanity and sloth. And the English, whose ethics are of no higher standard than the others', whom the war may finally weary, in whom your existance always causes some rancor, and who have given aid to Burr, might be stupid enough not to look unfavorably on this break, should it aid in procuring for them a momentary rest.

Now I am not saying that you must make war on these, as our papers say, that you threaten them with

an ultimatum. They are only in the second line among your enemies and will become dangerous to you only when they make peace with the others.

To declare war on anybody at all in your present position and that of the world would be the height of imprudence and folly: I am not speaking of the offense of shedding blood when it is not absolutely necessary for the preservation of fatherland and freedom.

But I do say that it is indispensable and always pressing, because it requires a rather large outlay of money and rather long labor, that you put yourself in a decent state of defense; that you have a good station and coastal artillery, and especially a very good mobile artillery which costs much less and does more good; that you have a reserve of national cavalry, by arousing rich citizens to form themselves into a mounted militia; that you have all the militia doubly armed, the one a complete equipment in their houses, the other to replace this, should it become necessary, in your armories; that you regularly drill the militia and accustom it to manœuvres. It is very easy to make a pleasure of this by having drill take place on Sunday, whenever it is a fine day, after divine services, and dancing after drill. The dance gets the warriors together and compensates them; in crowded towns it is an aid to morality and is a good matchmaker.

Four yearly fairs may serve for major manœuvres.

You have Independence Day coming rather fortunately about the summer solstice. You will find in your history suitable times for the others; and should there be none, there would still be found in spring the time of the blessing of the crops (*Ambarvalia*) [1] and the time when prizes are to be given to pupils; and in the fall there is the time of the harvest and marriages *en grandes cérémonies*. These three festal occasions would be civil, military, and religious in nature. The winter one would be still more religious, consecrated to old age, to homage paid to grandparents, to the most solemn reverence paid above all in the city hall, in public buildings, in temples, to *the country, your common mother*, to *God, Father of the universe*. These four holidays, preparation for them, hymns to be sung at them, and the pleasures that must accompany them, can *weave* a nation like a piece of goods.[2]

To shape and strengthen one's power is worth more than using it; one must have his arms sharpened and in good order, and never forget that arms are not tools.

But if safety requires the use of force, even before it has been completely organized, there should not be a

[1] An old Roman festival of crop purification.

[2] These suggestions of Du Pont's, looking toward the development of what might be termed a civic religion, are in character with many practices of the revolutionary period in France. See Albert Mathiez, *Les Origines des Cultes Révolutionnaires* (1904). Jefferson had considerable sympathy with the effort to substitute a rational civic religion for traditional faiths which he regarded as superstitious.

moment's hesitation. Speed in decision and action is half of success.

If the people of the Floridas are attacked, by any European power at all, defend them immediately, like good neighbors, and with your attitude and conduct so upright as to make you loved like fellow citizens rather than as a people merely helping them like soldiers.

If they should be conquered before your help could get there, free them at once with such an army as cannot be resisted: then join them to you either as a state if they agree, or as close allies until you get the consent of their former rulers: consent which you will get without trouble after their misfortunes, either for money or for rations and munitions for their insular colonies.

In the case of Canada, when the English abandon her, you will need nobody's consent. But only make the inhabitants understand how foolish it is to wait for arbitrary governors from the other side of the world when they can govern themselves, and when they can act better than anybody else in matters that concern their own interests. Lend assistance and a strong hand to independence and freedom; and neglect no sound proceedure to efface the last remains of the old hatred which has existed between the Canadians and the Yankees. You are not looking for subjects; you want only allies, confederates, friends. So do not attempt

conquests; unite yourselves to others and others to you. Let every speech and especially every action show continually that your troops by no means wish to conquer or oppress; but only to protect, free, aid, and help.

The Spaniards are giving you time. The English will still give you some. You must not count on that which Austria might give you: she will be whipped in less than no time at all or left in such a position as not to be able to be an obstacle.

I had to tell you all this politics, since it is possible that your ambassadors will not inform you, my dear and respected President. Your Excellency will make such use of it as your wisdom will suggest to you, according to how much of your administration will be left you. I regret a great deal that your uprightness causes you to make a change. When we see each other again, we shall be but two old philosophers, and shall have no influence but that which a bit of reason, a bit of experience, and a slight knowledge of men and things can give; and none of these things has any great influence over black beards, when the mouth which counsels is surrounded by a white beard.

I embrace you with the warmest respect.

I shall not sign my letter: you will recognize my writing and even more so my heart. Besides, Mr. Skipwith [1] who is a man of head, a man of heart, a

[1] See note 1, letter of September 8, 1805.

man of uprightness and one who deserves all your esteem, will not leave you in ignorance of who gave it to him.

Vale et me ama.

WASHINGTON, *March* 2, 1809

M. Dupont de Nemours[1]

DEAR SIR

My last to you was of May 2., since which I have received yours of May 25, June 1, July 23, 24, and Sep. 5, and distributed the two pamphlets according to your desire. They are read with the delight which everything from your pen gives.

After using every effort which could prevent or delay our being entangled in the war of Europe, that seems now our only resource. The edicts of the two belligerents, forbidding us to be seen on the ocean, we met by an embargo. This gave us time to call home our seamen, ships and property, to levy men and put our seaports into a certain state of defence. We have now taken off the embargo, except as to France & England & their territories, because 50 millions of exports, annually sacrificed, are the treble of what war would cost us. Besides that by war we shall take something, & lose less than at present. But to give you a true description of the state of things here, I must refer you to Mr.

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Memorial ed.), XII, 258–60.

Coles, the bearer of this, my Secretary, a most worthy, intelligent & well-informed young man, whom I recommend to your notice, and conversation on our affairs. His discretion and fidelity may be relied on. I expect he will find you with Spain at your feet, but England still afloat, & a barrier to the Spanish colonies. But all these concerns I am now leaving to be settled by my friend Mr. Madison. Within a few days I retire to my family, my books, and farms & having gained the harbor myself, shall look on my friends still buffeting the storm, with anxiety indeed, but not with envy. Never did a prisoner, released from his chains, feel such relief as I shall on shaking off the shackles of power. Nature intended me for the tranquil pursuits of science, by rendering them my supreme delight. But the enormities of the times in which I have lived, have forced me to take a part in resisting them, and to commit myself on the boisterous ocean of political passions. I thank God for the opportunity of retiring from them without censure, and carrying with me the most consoling proofs of public approbation.[1] I leave everything in the hands of men so able to take care of them, that if we are destined to meet misfortunes, it will be because no human wisdom could avert them. Should you return to the U.S. perhaps your curiosity may lead you to visit the hermit of Monticello. He will receive

[1] As a matter of fact, Jefferson's popularity was at very low ebb.

you with affection & delight; hailing you in the mean time with his affectionate salutations & assurances of constant esteem and respect.

TH: JEFFERSON

P.S. If you return to us, bring a couple of pair of true-bred Shepherd's dogs. You will add a valuable possession to a country now beginning to pay great attention to the raising [of] sheep.

VI

PARIS AND MONTICELLO
1809–1815

MONTICELLO. *June* 28. 09

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

DEAR SIR

The interruption of our commerce with England, produced by our embargo & non-intercourse law, & the general indignation excited by her bare-faced attempts, to make us accessories & tributories to her usurpations on the high seas, have generated in this country an universal spirit of manufacturing for ourselves, & of reducing to a minimum the number of articles for which we are dependent on her. The advantages too of lessening the occasions of risking our peace on the ocean, & of planting the consumer in our own soil by the side of the grower of produce, are so palpable, that no temporary suspension of injuries on her part, or agreements founded on that, will now prevent our continuing in what we have begun. The spirit of manufacture has taken deep root among us; and its foundations are laid in too great expence to be abandoned.

The bearer of this, Mr Ronaldson, will be able to inform you of the extent & perfection of the works

[1] Printed in *Writings* (Memorial ed.), XII, 293–96.

produced here by the late state of things, and to his information, which is greatest as to what is doing in the cities, I can add my own as to the country, where the principal articles wanted in every family are now fabricated within itself. This mass of *household* manufacture, unseen by the public eye, and so much greater than what is seen, is such at present, that, let our intercourse with England be opened when it may, not one half the amount of what we have heretofore taken from her, will ever again be demanded. The great call from the country has hitherto been of coarse goods. These are now made in our families, & the advantage is too sensible ever to be relinquished. It is one of those obvious improvements in our condition, which needed only to be once forced on our attentions, never again to be abandoned.

Among the arts which have made great progress among us is that of printing. Heretofore we imported our books, & with them much political principle, from England. We now print a great deal, & shall soon supply ourselves with most of the books of considerable demand. But the foundation of printing you know, is the type-foundery, and a material essential to that is Antimony. Unfortunately that mineral is not among those as yet found in the United States, and the difficulty & dearness of getting it from England, will force us to discontinue our type-founderies, & resort to her

again for our books, unless some new source of supply can be found. The bearer, Mr Ronaldson, is of the concern of Binney & Ronaldson, type-founders of Philadelphia. He goes to France for the purpose of opening some new source of supply, where we learn that this article is abundant. The enhancement of the price in England has taught us the fact, that it's exportation thither from France must be interrupted either by the war or express prohibition. Our relations however with France, are too unlike hers with England, to place us under the same interdiction. Regulations for preventing the transportation of the article to England, under the cover of supplies to America may be thought requisite. The bearer, I am persuaded, will readily give any assurances which may be required for this object, & the wants of his own type-foundery here are a sufficient pledge that what he gets is *bona fide* to supply them. I do not know that there will be any obstacle to his bringing from France any quantity of Antimony he may have occasion for: but lest there should be, I have taken the liberty of recommending him to your patronage. I know your enlightened & liberal views on subjects of this kind, & the friendly interest you take in whatever concerns our welfare. I place Mr Ronaldson therefore in your hands, and pray you to advise him, & patronize the object which carries him to Europe, & is so interesting to him & to

our country. His knolege of what is passing among us, will be a rich source of information for you, and especially as to the state & progress of our manufactures. Your kindness to him will confer an obligation on me, & will be an additional title to the high & affectionate esteem & respect of an antient & sincere friend.

TH: JEFFERSON

PARIS, *7ber* [*September*] 14, 1810

To Thomas Jefferson
Ex-President of the United States
Associé de l'Institut de France

MY VERY RESPECTED FRIEND,

You will find enclosed my little treatise on the finances of the United States,[1] useless perhaps for the time being but I hope not for always.[2] . . .

Still, there is no doubt that these changes, or other similar ones, shall have to occur as soon as the most usual manufactures are established and are prosperous in America; and when your business with Europe is reduced to *objets de luxe*, which are never used except by the very rich, consequently a very small number; and even these the seriousness of republican manners and the religious opinions of several of your citizens will make rarer than anywhere else.

[1] Called forth by Jefferson's letter of June 28, 1809. The matter was discussed, rather vaguely, in two letters from Du Pont, January 20, and April 10, 1810, which are not reproduced here.

[2] Two brief paragraphs are omitted.

When Reason and Religion grow together, it is difficult to resist them.

Thus the revenue from your customs will diminish in proportion to the growth of your industries. There will come a time when this revenue will not exceed two million dollars; and as soon as it is perceptibly diminished, you will be obliged to supplement it by other forms of taxation.

I do not know whether this fact is true; but I have been told that a step had been taken to seek this supplement in a mistaken and very dangerous and slippery way by General Hamilton, which I think was definitely closed by the small revolt of the North-West and of Pennsylvania which demanded a movement of troops at the very first attempt.[1]

I was told that levies or taxes or excises had been recently introduced to cover the work and the products of your distilleries.[2]

That would be the beginning of one of the worst kinds of taxation that could be adopted. A tax unequal in its assessment, costly in its collection, vexatious in its form; lending itself, on the one hand, to fraud and bad faith, on the other, to bribery and tyranny. A tax which cannot be in accord with the free constitution of a people and of a country in which

[1] The "Whiskey Rebellion" of 1794.

[2] See Jefferson's letter of April 15, 1811.

a man's home ought to be an inviolable asylum, and where no authority ought to be able to use force in opening his doors in any other case than those of fire, *flagrans delictum*, or the accusation of a crime.

To create in a republic an army and arms [?], necessarily numerous, against the citizens, is to destroy that republic: that is making *a prince* out of the general director of the *tax*, and changing into *nobles* the particular directors. And this *prince* with his *nobles* will soon become independent of the government itself. Through fear of a financial *deficit*, they impose *laws* which they call *anti-fraud* [répressives de la Fraud]. They multiply them and heap them up. They entangle the citizens like flies in a spider-web.

If that has not happened yet, my excellent friend, let the President, the Secretaries, the Senate, and Congress, let all good citizens and all men of spirit unite to prevent its happening!

If the evil has begun, let the same efforts be used to tear down this deadly network and remove these busy bees from the United States.

I send my best wishes to your country, and my respectful affection.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

I recommend my children to your kind attention.

PARIS, *March* 31, 1811

To Thomas Jefferson
Ex-President of the United States

MY MOST RESPECTED FRIEND,

I know that my work on the finances of the United States has reached you, and I am very curious to know what your opinion of it is.

I still think it a little premature, thank heaven; but the time when its principles can, perhaps ought to, be submitted to the consideration of your statesmen grows nearer year by year. And it is good to think about it beforehand.

Did you think it worthy of being communicated to Mr. Madison and Mr. Galatin? [1]

What I especially wish for it is your vote. Every idea having the approval of a philosopher and legislator like you will some day be of use to your country and the world.[2] . . .

I do not know when I shall be free to return and see you and bear the tribute of my last days to your noble and wise citizens who are now the only hope of the world. I have another volume of Monsieur Turgot's works in the press, and the formalities established for the censorship of books make the printing go very slowly.

Meanwhile, I have taken charge of the organization of the home aid [*secours à domicile*] which the needy of

[1] See the following letter. [2] Two paragraphs omitted.

Paris require, and which the *Administration des Hôpitaux et des Hospices*, to which the government gives money for this purpose (insufficient, it is true, but given for a good purpose), owes them. It requires intelligence to increase its efficacy. The work is difficult, it interests the emotions, it requires the entire use of physical and spiritual force. You will find it quite within reason that your old friend should go to some trouble in this matter. When the machine is assembled, an honest man, whoever he may be, will suffice to run it; and then I shall leave.

You know my warm affection and deep respect for you.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

MONTICELLO, *April* 15, 1811

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

DEAR SIR,

I have to acknoledge the reciept of your letters of Jan. 20. & Sept. 14. 1810, and, with the latter, your Observations on the subject of taxes. They bear the stamps of logic and eloquence which mark everything coming from you, and place the doctrines of the Economists in their strongest points of view: my present retirement and unmeddling disposition make of this *une question oiseuse pour moi.* But after reading the Observations with great pleasure, I forwarded them

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Ford ed.), IX, 315–22.

to the President [1] and Mr. Gallatin, in whose hands they may be useful. Yet I do not believe the change of our system of taxation will be forced on us so early as you expect, if war be avoided. It is true we are going greatly into manufactures; but the mass of them are household manufactures of the coarse articles worn by the laborers & farmers of the family. These I verily believe we shall succeed in making to the whole extent of our necessities. But the attempts at fine goods will probably be abortive. They are undertaken by company establishments, & chiefly in the towns; will have little success, & short continuance in a country where the charms of agriculture attract every being who can engage in it. Our revenue will be less than it would be were we to continue to import instead of manufacturing our coarse goods. But the increase of population & production will keep pace with that of manufactures, and maintain the quantum of exports at the present level at least: and the imports must be equivalent to them, & consequently the revenue on them be undiminished. I keep up my hopes that, if war be avoided, Mr. Madison will be able to compleat the paiment of the national debt within his term, after which one third of the present revenue would support the government. Your information that a commence-

[1] See Jefferson to Madison, December 8, 1810, *Writings* (Memorial ed.), XIX, 177. He said that, on the whole, Du Pont's memoir was "well worth reading."

ment of excise had been again made, is entirely unfounded. I hope the death blow to that most vexatious & unproductive of all taxes was given at the commencement of my administration, & believe it's revival would give the death blow to any administration whatever. In most of the middle and Southern states some land tax is now paid into the State treasury, and for this purpose the lands have been classed & valued, & the tax assessed according to that valuation. In these an excise is most odious. In the eastern States land taxes are odious, excises less unpopular. We are all the more reconciled to the tax on importations, because it falls exclusively on the rich, and, with the equal partition of intestate's estates, constitute the best agrarian law. In fact, the poor man in this country who uses nothing but what is made within his own farm or family, or within the U.S. pays not a farthing of tax to the general government, but on his salt; and should we go into that manufacture, as we ought to do, he will pay not one cent. Our revenues once liberated by the discharge of the public debt, & it's surplus applied to canals, roads, schools, &c., and the farmer will see his government supported, his children educated, & the face of his country made a paradise by the contributions of the rich alone, without his being called on to spare a cent from his earnings. The path we are now pursuing leads directly to this end,

which we cannot fail to attain unless our administration should fall into unwise hands.

Another great field of political experiment is opening in our neighborhood, in Spanish America. I fear the degrading ignorance into which their priests & kings have sunk them, has disqualified them from the maintenance, or even knoledge of their rights, & that much blood may be shed for little improvement in their condition. Should their new rulers honestly lay their shoulders to remove the great obstacle of ignorance, and press the remedies of education & information, they will still be in jeopardy until another generation comes into place, & what may happen in the interval cannot be predicted, nor shall you or I live to see it. In these cases I console myself with the reflection that those who will come after us will be as wise as we are, & as able to take care of themselves as we have been. I hope you continue to preserve your health, & that you may long continue to do so in happiness is the prayer of yours affectionately.

TH: JEFFERSON

[*Sep.* 5, 1811.]

To Monsieur Jefferson

MY RESPECTED FRIEND,

I am sending to America three excellent forerunners, my daughter-in-law, Madame de Pusy, whom you

have already seen, her daughter who had the honor of dining with you in Washington when she was still a child, and who is living up to the promise she gave then, and lastly Maurice de Pusy who was only three months old the first time he embarked for the United States and who has become the hope of that branch of my family. He has already had some instruction in the best of our *Lycées*, was always among the first in his class, and has won several prizes. I hope he will do no less well in the American school in which he shall be placed; and I shall be much obliged to you to suggest to his mother the one to which she should give preference.

It is not without regret that I see that there has not been much advance made in the public educational institutions, the outline for which your Excellency was so good as to ask of me and to which you had given your approval.

What was needed and what is still needed the most is the preparation of books on the classics for the lower grades; that is, for the most important of the (educational) roads: for it is in the colleges, the universities, and the academies that the small number of scholars is made; but it is in the elementary schools that the whole nation is brought up. Thence it must set out on the road of reason, courage, intelligence, and virtue.

Just now you have leisure, my respected friend; you

have genius and a lofty point of view; you are very kind and very enlightened; so make a plan and outline for the four or five books which are necessary for the three classes of which the most elementary schools must be composed; for children of seven to eight years; eight to nine; nine to ten. Get from your government or by general subscription the twelve thousand dollars which are to be distributed as prizes to their children; and in twenty or thirty years hence see the men, the citizens they will have made. I do not hope to be in their midst, but I see and admire them as if I were there.

I am sending you the life of a great man over whom this sort of idea had great influence, and whom I saw reduced to tears when speaking of the degree of goodness which mankind is capable of acquiring and which it will acquire some day: but only after it shall have enjoyed for thirty or forty years a special sort of good public instruction, and good classic books for the very young are the first and principal element in this.

I beg you to do this so that, when I shall be able to go from Eleutherian-Mill and spend a month at Monticello, I shall find this work either completed or ready to have the finishing touches put to it.

If you are summoned to return to the presidency, do not refuse it.

Men capable of being of great use to their country

and to every nation are so rare today that for them age and even infirmity must be as nothing. It is indispensable for them to die at work and on their feet.

I send you my tenderest greetings, my hope, and my respect.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

September 5, 1811.

Xber [*December*] 12, 1811

To Thomas Jefferson

MY MOST RESPECTED FRIEND,

I received through the agency of Mr. Barlow,[1] and with much gratitude, your letter of April 15.

A man like you may retire from office but never from public affairs. You are a Magistrate of Mankind.

So much the better if the establishment of manufactures in your country does not compel you to change your tax system as soon as was feared.

But it must happen some day, and the government and especially public opinion must be prepared for it. The science of political economy must not be unknown or neglected in the United States. Where would the most important questions be discussed if not in a republic which respects the freedom of the press, which is itself today the latest of the republics which have existed, the last hope of those which are to be born and which it will propagate like a queen bee? How is it

[1] Joel Barlow, the poet, Minister to France, 1811–1812.

possible for sovereigns, in a century in which intelligence, although less alert and less widespread than it was thirty years ago, nevertheless, is far from being dead, — how (I say) can sovereigns possibly refuse to discuss with profundity their interests, their rights, and their duties?

I deeply regret that I cannot make a direct contribution. It will be impossible for me to become a good writer of English. After sixty years, one cannot learn how to express himself well in a language which was foreign to his youth. But Mr. Paterson, whom you recommended to me, has promised me to translate the *dissertation on finances* and the *essay on national education*,[1] two works which you inspired and which I owe to your kindness. He even promised to translate also *The Analytical Table of the Principles of Political Economy* [*Table Raisonnée des Principes de l'Économie Politique*]. I shall ask him to pass these translations on to you when they are done, in order that your remarkable keenness may point out the corrections which you believe necessary. He is a young man of great promise.

I am glad to see that the United States has enough time ahead of it to make a decision about its public revenues; also that the wiping out of its debts will greatly and promptly lessen its political needs; and

[1] So far as we know, he never did. Du Pont cherished many illusions about the translation of his treatises.

that the consumption of foreign commodities on the part of your wealthy citizens will help out for several years yet the income from your customs, if you can avoid war.

If it cannot be avoided, consolidate your union with the Floridas and effect one with Canada: fortify your ports and especially New York, for Governor's Island is an insufficient defence for it. Then make peace.[1] . . .

You think that you gave, at the beginning of your wise administration, the *coup de grace* to the *excise system* attempted by General Hamilton. You did an excellent thing. However, if the land tax continues to be odious in the Eastern Territory, the best cultivated part of the United States which has the good fortune to be free from slavery, its success may not be complete: the disease may have a relapse.

The chief errors relative to the general tax are two, of which the first is the desire to have everybody contribute, especially workmen, merchants, capitalists. That is an end which cannot be attained; since there is no way to keep some from selling the fruit of their labor, and others from letting out the use of their money, so as to indemnify themselves with a great rate of interest at the expense of the crop owners.

The other error has a loftier origin. It is a consequence of the dearth of correct ideas as to the exact

[1] The rest of this paragraph and all of the following are omitted.

status, in political societies, of the landowners and of workmen who are not landowners, and the debt that society owes to each of them.

The latter are members of a republic universal and without magistracies, and they are to be found in every state; and to them the governments and citizens of all other states having a constitution, freedom in their pursuits, immunity from every tax, free enjoyment of the good order resulting from all magistracies, elegibility to office if they deserve it and if they are acceptable to the voters. When they are elected to some duty, or when they have bought land (which they must always be allowed to do), they become *citizens*: until then, they were and should be only *inhabitants*. Liberty, freedom from taxation, safety of person and property, protection of the law in all their contracts — that is the extent and limit of their rights. To grant them more would be as unreasonable as to wish, within each family, to give the servants the right of running the affairs of the household conjointly with the masters. To wish to make them pay for the exercise of these natural rights would be to act like the miser who stole the oats from his horses.[1] Their service would become of less worth and of greater expense.

Municipal and sovereign rights, the right to sit and

[1] Note that Du Pont opposed both the taxing and the enfranchising of the landless.

deliberate in political assemblies, that of voting, that of promulgating and executing the laws, belong exclusively to landowners, because these only are members of a particular republic, having a stretch of land and the duty of administering it.

When one leaves out of consideration these bases of civilized and established society, when one believes, or permits others to believe, that those who have naught but their two arms and their personal property are *citizens* just as much as landowners are, and have the right either to ask for a share without acquiring it or to deliberate about the laws pertaining to these lands which they do not own, one is aiding in the brewing of a storm, preparing the way for revolutions, opening the way for Pisistratuses, Mariuses, and Caesars, men who make themselves *more democratic* than nature, justice, and reason require in order to become *tyrants*, to violate every right, to substitute their arbitrary wishes for law, to offend morality, and to degrade humanity.

In a republic wishing to be peaceful, lasting, free from trouble, one must act so that there is no class which is or may believe itself to be oppressed, and which wishes protection to oppress in its turn, for such are to be found and it is a very popular *rôle*.

Everybody must be able to work and gain without being subject to any vexation. Everybody must be able

to speak and publish his opinion about matters, provided that nobody is insulted and, what is even worse, slandered: that is what freedom of speech and of the press consists of. But to express one's thought *semi-officially* [*officieusement*], or to deliberate *officially* and to *vote*, are two very different matters.[1] . . .

But they [workers] have not the right to consider themselves members of the sovereign power, so long as they have not bought lands. They have not the right to enter the assemblies of the district in which they are domiciled, and they can be deputed to another assembly only through the free choice which the electors of their district or county might make in that matter. They can be named for every public office by the voters or by the government, and then they have the right to fill that office which has been entrusted to them. And nothing more.

"They enjoy," it will be said, "the protection of the law and the help of the public forces, then why should they not pay?" They enjoy them, because these are things which are not to be refused any one, whoever he may be, things which are due the first and least known stranger to put his foot into the country. What sort of government would it be which would allow those who are not citizens to be robbed, insulted, beaten, and killed? It would be a government of barbarians.

[1] The rest of this paragraph is omitted.

There is in real estate a permanent interest and a habit of useful work, both of which become a judge of reason. Assemblies of land owners are neither too numerous nor riotous. *The country belongs to those who can sell it*, and they have powerful reasons for keeping it and governing it well.

If they ask nothing of others, their sovereignty is useful to all and can oppress nobody. It protects everything and everybody. It admits to its hamlets all those who are economical enough and wise enough to manage to acquire landed property. It refuses admittance only to misconduct and brigandage. A people free and exempt from taxes has nothing to wish for: a good mental attitude can lead it to everything.

Revolts in a republic are always brought about because the nobles or citizens have wanted to make the lower classes pay, hinder them in their work, and demand humiliating services of them. An ambitious man puts himself at the head of these poor people whose labor and personal property have not been respected. He makes them plunderers, and they make him a prince.

The prince or his successors make themselves detested, because their position spoils them and because their arbitrary power is naturally odious.[1] . . .

What happens? The people revolt anew and fall

[1] A brief, illegible paragraph is omitted.

from an exaggerated democracy once more into an intolerable tyranny.

That is the circle in which all nations have traveled up to the present and from which it is necessary to depart. And a departure will be made very easily if a slightly larger degree of intelligence will be exerted than has been.

Excepting those nations absolutely bereft of reason, everywhere republican sentiments will be found. And even in a certain sense, every state is a republic or quite ready to become one. What are called monarchies are really republics in which the executive and legislative powers are badly organized, in which the real ruler is oppressed or can be by his representatives. However, his right is not wholly disregarded. No prince dares to or can consider himself as aught but the representative or delegate of the owners of the land.[1] . . .

These are your maxims, excellent philosopher,[2] and that is why I love and respect you so much.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

[1] About a page and a half, confused and partly illegible, omitted.

[2] Referring perhaps to the paragraphs immediately preceding, which we have omitted because of their illegibility. See Jefferson's letter of April 24, 1816, below, in which he suggests that he is more democratic and more a believer in self-government than Du Pont.

Nov. 29. 13

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

MY VERY DEAR AND ESTIMABLE FRIEND,

In answering the several very kind letters I have recieved from you, I owe to yourself and to the most able and estimable author of the Commentaries on Montesquieu to begin by assuring you that I am not the author of that work, and of my own consciousness that it is far beyond my qualifications.[2] In truth I consider it as the most profound and logical work which has been presented to the present generation. On the subject of government particularly there is a purity and soundness of principle which renders it precious to our country particularly, where I trust it will become the elementary work for the youth of our academies and Colleges. The paradoxes of Montesquieu have been too long uncorrected. I will not fail to send you a copy of the work if possible to get it through the perils of the sea.

I am next to return you thanks for the copy of the works of Turgot, now compleated by the reciept of

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Memorial ed.), XIX, 195–200.

[2] Du Pont had attributed to Jefferson the *Commentary and Review of Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws* (Philadelphia, 1811), which was in reality translated from the French manuscript of DeStutt de Tracy. Du Pont had discussed the work in a twenty-four page letter to Jefferson, January 25, 1812, and in a letter of April 14, 1812. He even wanted to translate it into French! The book was not published in France until 1819. Jefferson had supervised the American translation and publication. See Gilbert Chinard, *Jefferson et les Idéologues* (1925), pp. 123–24 and ch. II.

the last volume. In him we know not which most to admire, the comprehensiveness of his mind, or the benevolence and purity of his heart. In his Distribution of Riches, and other general works, and in the great principles developed in his smaller work we admire the gigantic stature of his mind. But when we see that mind thwarted, harrassed, maligned and forced to exert all it's powers in the details of provincial administration, we regret to see a Hercules laying his shoulder to the wheel of an ox-cart. The sound principles which he establishes in his particular as well as general works are a valuable legacy to ill-governed man, and will spread from their provincial limits to the great circle of mankind.

I am indebted to you for your letter by Mr. Correa,[1] and the benefit it procured me of his acquaintance. He was so kind as to pay me a visit at Monticello which enabled me to see for myself that he was still beyond all the eulogies with which yourself and other friends had preconized [*sic*] him. Learned beyond any one I had before met with, good, modest, and of the simplest manners, the idea of losing him again filled me with regret: and how much did I lament that we could not place him at the head of that great institution which I have so long nourished the hope of seeing established

[1] Joseph Francisco Corréa da Serra (1750–1823), Portuguese botanist, who came to America in 1813 to prosecute researches in natural history.

in my country; and towards which you had so kindly contributed your luminous views. But, my friend, that institution is still in embryo as you left it: and from the complexion of our popular legislature and the narrow and niggardly views of ignorance courting the suffrage of ignorance to obtain a seat in it, I see little prospect of such an establishment until the national government shall be authorized to take it up and form it on the comprehensive basis of all the useful sciences.

The inauspicious commencement of our war [1] has damped at first the hopes of fulfilling your injunctions to add the Floridas and Canada to our confederacy. The former indeed might have been added but for our steady adherence to the sound principles of National integrity, which forbade us to take what was a neighbor's merely because it suited us; and especially from a neighbor under circumstances of peculiar affliction. But seeing now that his afflictions do not prevent him from making those provinces a focus of hostile and savage combinations for the massacre of our women and children by the tomahawk and scalping knife of the Indian, these scruples must yield to the necessities of self-defence: and I trust that the ensuing session of Congress will authorize the incorporation of it with ourselves. Their inhabitants universally wish it and they are in truth the only legitimate proprietors of the

[1] The War of 1812.

soil & government. Canada might have been ours in the preceding year but for the treachery of our General who unfortunately commanded on it's border. There could have been no serious resistance to the progress of the force he commanded, in it's march through Upper Canada, but he sold and delivered his army, fortified and furnished as it was, to an enemy one fourth his number. This was followed by a series of losses flowing from the same source of unqualified commanders. Carelessness, cowardice, foolhardiness & sheer imbecility lost us 4 other successive bodies of men, who under faithfull and capable leaders would have saved us from the affliction and the English from the crime of the thousands of men, women & children murdered & scalped by the savages under the procurement & direction of British officers, some on capitulation, some in the field, & some in their houses and beds. The determined bravery of our men, whether regulars or militia, evidenced in every circumstance when the treachery or imbecility of their commanders permitted, still kept up our confidence and sounder and abler men now placed at their head have given us possession of the whole of Upper Canada & the lakes. At the moment I am writing I am in hourly expectation of learning that Gen. Wilkinson, who about the 10th inst. was entering the Lake of St. Francis in his descent upon Montreal has taken possession of it, the force of the

enemy there being not such as to give us much apprehension. Between that place and Quebec there is nothing to stop us but the advance of the season.

The achievements of our little navy have claimed and obtained the admiration of all, in spite of the endeavors of the English by lying misrepresentations of the force of the vessels on both sides to conceal the truth. The loss indeed of half a dozen frigates and sloops of war is no sensible diminution of numbers to them; but the loss of the general opinion that they were invincible at sea, the lesson taught to the world that they can be beaten by an equal force, has, by it's moral effect lost them half their physical force. I consider ourselves as now possessed of everything from Florida point to the walls of Quebec. This last place is not worth the blood it would cost. It may be considered as impregnable to an enemy not possessing the water. I hope therefore we shall not attempt it, but leave it to be voluntarily evacuated by it's inhabitants, cut off from all resources of subsistence by the loss of the upper country.

I will ask you no questions, my friend, about your return to the U.S. At your time of life it is scarcely perhaps advisable. An exchange of the society, the urbanity, and the real comforts to which you have been formed by the habits of a long life, would be a great and real sacrifice. Whether therefore I shall ever

see you again, or not, let me live in your esteem, as you ever will in mine, most affectionately and devotedly.

TH: JEFFERSON

P.S. Monticello, Dec. 14. We have been disappointed in the result of the expedition against Montreal. The 2d. in command who had been detached ashore with a large portion of the army, failing to join the main body according to orders at the entrance of the Lake St. Francis, the enterprise was of necessity abandoned at that point, and the inclemency of the winter being already set in, the army was forced to go into winter quarters near that place. Since the date of my letter I have received yours of Sep. 18. & a printed copy of your plan of national education of which I possessed the MS. If I can get this translated and printed it will contribute to advance the public mind to undertake the institution. The persuading those of the benefit of science who possess none, is a slow operation.

MONTICELLO, *Feb.* 28. 15

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

MY DEAR AND RESPECTED FRIEND,

My last to you was of Nov. 29. & Dec. 14. 13. since which I have received your's of July 14.[2] I have to

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Memorial ed.), XIV, 255–58. Du Pont probably did not receive this letter. See Jefferson's of May 15.

[2] Not discovered.

congratulate you, which I do sincerely on having got back from Robespierre and Bonaparte, to your ante-revolutionary condition.[1] You are now nearly where you were at the *Jeu de paume* on the 20th of June 1789. The king would then have yielded by convention[,] freedom of religion, freedom of the press, trial by jury, *Habeas corpus*, and a representative legislature. These I consider as the essentials constituting free government, and that the organization of the Executive is interesting, as it may ensure wisdom and integrity in the first place, but next as it may favor or endanger the preservation of these fundamentals. Altho' I do not think the late Capitulation of the King quite equal to all this, yet believing his dispositions to be moderate and friendly to the happiness of the people, and seeing that he is without the bias of issue, I am in hopes your patriots may, by constant and prudent pressure, obtain from him what is still wanting to give you a temperate degree of freedom and security. Should this not be done, I should really apprehend a relapse into discontents, which might again let in Bonaparte.

Here, at length, we have peace. But I view it as an armistice only, because no provision is made against the practice of impressment. As this then will revive in the first moment of a war in Europe, it's revival will be a declaration of war here. Our whole business in the

[1] Referring to the first Bourbon restoration.

mean time ought to be a sedulous preparation for it, fortifying our seaports, filling our magazines, classing and disciplining our militia, forming officers, and above all establishing a sound system of finance. You will see by the want of system in this last department, and even the want of principles, how much we are in arrears in that science. With sufficient means in the hands of our citizens, and sufficient will to bestow them on the government, we are floundering in expedients equally unproductive and ruinous; and proving how little are understood here those sound principles of political economy first developed by the Economists, since commented and dilated by Smith, Say, yourself, and the luminous Reviewer of Montesquieu. I have been endeavoring to get the able paper on this subject, which you addressed to me in July 1810, and enlarged in a copy recieved the last year, translated & printed here in order to draw the attention of our citizens to this subject; but have not as yet succeeded. Our printers are enterprising only in novels and light reading. The readers of works of science, altho' in considerable number, are so sparse in their situations, that such works are of slow circulation. But I shall persevere.

This letter will be delivered to you by Mr. Ticknor,[1] a young gentleman from Massachusetts of much erudi-

[1] George Ticknor (1791–1871). He never entered political life, but later filled with great distinction the chair of modern languages at Harvard and became a noted writer on Spanish literature.

tion and great merit. He has compleated his course of law reading, and, before entering on the practice, proposes to pass two or three years in seeing Europe, and adding to his stores of knoledge what he can acquire there. Should he enter the career of politics in his own country, he will go far in obtaining it's honors and powers. He is worthy of any friendly offices you may be so good as to render him, and to his acknoledgments of them will be added my own. By him I send you a copy of the Review of Montesquieu, from my own shelf, the impression being, I believe, exhausted by the late President of the College of Williamsburg having adopted it as the elementary book there. I am persuading the author to permit me to give his name to the public, and to permit the original to be printed in Paris. Altho' your presses, I observe, are put under the leading strings of your government, yet this is such a work as would have been licensed at any period, early or late, of the reign of Louis XVI. Surely the present government will not expect to repress the progress of the public mind farther back than that. I salute you with all veneration and affection.

TH: JEFFERSON

VII

DU PONT'S LAST VISIT TO AMERICA
1815–1817

MONTICELLO, *May* 15. 15

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The newspapers tell us you are arrived in the U.S. I congratulate my country on this as a manifestation that you consider it's civil advantages as more than equivalent to the physical comforts and social delights of a country which possesses both in the highest degree of any one on earth. You despair of your country, and so do I.[2] A military despotism is now fixed upon it permanently, especially if the son of the tyrant should have virtues and talents. What a treat would it be to me, to be with you, and to learn from you all the intrigues, apostasies and treacheries which have produced this last death's blow to the hopes of France. For, altho' not in the will, there was in the imbecility of the Bourbons a foundation of hope that the patriots of France might obtain a moderate representative government. Here you will find rejoicings on this event, and by a strange *quid pro quo*, not by the party hostile to liberty,

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Memorial ed.), XIV, 297–98.

[2] Napoleon had returned from Elba.

but by it's zealous friends. In this they see nothing but the scourge reproduced for the back of England. They do not permit themselves to see in it the blast of all the hopes of mankind, and that however it may jeopardize England, it gives to her self-defence the lying countenance again of being the sole champion of the rights of man, to which, in all other nations she is most adverse. I wrote to you on the 28th of February, by a Mr. Ticknor, then proposing to sail for France: but the conclusion of peace induced him to go first to England. I hope he will keep my letter out of the post offices of France; for it was not written for the inspection of those now in power. You will now be a witness of our deplorable ignorance in finance and political economy generally. I mentioned in my letter of Feb. that I was endeavoring to get your memoir on that subject printed: I have not yet succeeded. I am just setting out to a distant possession of mine and shall be absent three weeks. God bless you.

TH: JEFFERSON

ELEUTHERIAN MILL
NEAR WILMINGTON, DELAWARE
May 26, 1815

To Mr. Jefferson

DEAREST AND NOBLEST FRIEND,

I had counted on bringing you news myself of my arrival in America. But your papers are very indiscreet

and I stayed with my children, surrounded by my grandchildren, longer than I had intended.

The hope of finding at Monticello a brother in political economy, a master in philosophy, greatly entered into my choice of a retreat, if it is a retreat.

I do not yet think that it is one. I consider my trip and my sojourn only as the acquisition of a new and more peaceful study in which I shall be able to work at improving myself, ripening my ideas, collecting them better, setting them forth with more order and ability under the eyes of men whom *God* is calling, or will call, and planning and drafting constitutions and laws.

Scarcely twice in my long life have I been so fortunate as to be satisfied with my work. I have had busy at one and the same time my two hands, my two eyes, and the two sides of my head with entirely different matters, one of which was always harmful to the others. The duties of an administrator and the affairs of a *pater familias* offered too many distractions to the philosopher.

Today I am morally sure of my dinner.

I have no uneasiness for my children. They have always been men of uprightness, probity, and courage. They can usefully serve the country in which I believed it my duty to locate them. They have acquired extraordinary capabilities. If they use them in procuring for my grandchildren an absolutely independent

existence, they can leave them among the freest and most enlightened of their enlightened and free citizens.

They have had wives both beautiful and good. Men are made like merinos; and for every animal having an equal number of both sexes and upon reaching its full maturity God imagined love, in order to pair off the races. I have, therefore, sufficiently good reasons for hoping that under a government in which the nobility is not hereditary and influences marriages in no way, my family will become illustrious and will deserve to be so.

I no longer have any positive engagements to any political state.

I do not have to fear either being called to an office or driven from one.

I shall not have to deliver extempore speeches in an assembly, or write them the evening before for a privy council or a legislative committee.

I shall have time to cultivate whatever reasoning powers God has been so good as to give me, and to consider and restrain the impetuousness which He also gave me.

I have as yet been only an active young man with kindly feelings. My white hair asks and insists that I at length be something more.

I shall be able to consult Jefferson and Corréa.[1] No emperor has two advisers of such weight.

[1] See note on Jefferson's letter of November 29, 1813.

So we shall not work for empires, but for the world and future centuries.

The combination of circumstances is favorable to it.

Ten or twelve great republics are in process of formation on your continent. They will be established and consolidated even if some of them might be temporarily vanquished by force or the weakness of Spain.

Three of these already united republics have done me the honor of consulting me.

They will all consolidate and that too with your victorious republic which will give them good examples and likewise be able to receive some.

These confederations, if they are well conceived and wisely contracted, will be able to make of America an immense republic, having a length of two thousand leagues and an average width of five hundred leagues. Then we shall laugh at those who believed for such a long time that no republic could be organized outside of the precincts of a small town or a small canton.

We shall laugh at them, but with indulgent moderation. They had no idea of a *representative government*, and they had experienced the danger of stormy assemblies.

Representative governments, begun in England and vastly improved in the United States by houses which are not hereditary, have as yet nowhere reached the perfection of which they are capable. It would have been necessary to "*commencer par le commencement*," that

is, with a good, communal constitution [*constitution de commune*], the very principles of which are not yet stated in any country.

But from the very establishment of communes that are just, reasonable, and well administered, there is nothing easier than to institute, with a certain number of these good communes, good cantons; then with these good cantons, good districts; with the good districts, good circles; with the good circles, excellent republics; with these excellent republics, powerful and peaceful confederations.

The present morass of Spanish America, from which it must extricate itself through governments, seems to me to offer more opportunities for having them good than the warlike storm of Europe. My reason for this opinion and this hope is that America as yet has no princes, except a poor King of Portugal whose example is a temptation to no one.

The commanders of the insurgents will not easily be able to become princes or kings. They are compelled to arm their people for *independence*, and your United States when they gained theirs did not crown Washington: the help which they will have to give in arms and munitions will add weight to their example.

As soon as American liberty is definitely assured against the absurd and proud and greedy pretensions of Europe, the inhabitants of each natural division

indicated by mountains and rivers will think of giving themselves *a fatherland*, and their chiefs will be happy to be its officers.

That will be a matter of a very small number of years, during which wretched Europe will be given over to a frightful war; but the results of this will not be as serious as we shall be made to believe.

Military despotism will not be able to maintain itself. The nations could never supply armies in sufficient numbers. Buonaparte and his army today invoke republican ideas, or even more than republican, popular ideas, hatred against the nobles, against the priests, against bad taxes. There is but a step from this state of mind to revolt against kings. In two years the Emperor Napoleon will find that he is no longer able to satisfy both his troops and his subjects. The embarrassing situation in which he will find himself would lead rather to a new ochlocracy than to a continuation of an arbitrary and absolute government.

About the same time, Germany, Italy, and England perhaps, will get tired fighting for a family which they could not uphold even if their soldiers succeeded in returning it to France, because there is no longer any belief in its promises and because national pride is too deeply hurt. The great probability is that Germany, Italy, and England even, will send away their kings, and will renounce not only the kings but also royalty.

None of these countries, however, will be willing to obey Buonaparte, for his royalty would be very severe for those foreign countries, and he will no longer have the necessary strength to force them. Will his empire remain alone in the midst of these new republics? And will these agree to bad constitutions when America has a good one? *Nil desperandum.*

I am sorry because I am old; and much more so, because the transition to free governments must cost so much blood. Not a drop would have been spilled, had not the detestable Lameths [1] profaned the French revolution by the seditions which they and their friends organized. But anent that, what is done, is done. A part of what there is to do, for the better, for the worse, has become inevitable. Let us try to soften and shorten these calamities. That is a very noble mission.

My kind Jefferson, let your intelligence help my courage in this matter. My calculations on the different periods of life promise me still about eight years. You are three years younger than I am and I think that your health is better than mine.

Let us not die without putting the time that is left us to great profit.

I send you my deepest and tenderest regards.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

[1] Each of the three Lameth brothers, Alexandre, Théodore, and Charles-Malo-François, played a part in the French Revolution. The former, with Barnave and Adrien Duport, led the party of the left in the

My wife was sick when I left. She was unable to follow me. I expect her in several months or a year at the latest. Until she arrives, I shall have but half of my spirits. She is a great support to me. Her head and her heart are full of excellent counsel.

But I could not await the arrival of that hypocrite Buonaparte in Paris.[1] I knew how Cicero was hoaxed because he believed the promises of Octavius. And whatever good work I can still do did not allow me to run the risk of dying in a cell, because of refusals which it would have become me proudly to make.

I count on going with Corréa and spending several days at Monticello, when we learn that you are back.

MONTICELLO *June* 6. 15

M. Dupont de Nemours

DEAR SIR

I am just returned from the journey mentioned in mine of May 15. and find here yours of May 26. I see that you do not despair of your country, but I confess I foresee no definite term to the despotism now re-established there, and the less as the nation seems to

Constituent Assembly. He is chiefly noted for a speech of February 28, 1791, against Mirabeau. See F. A. Aulard, *Les Orateurs de l'Assemblée Constituante*.

[1] As Secretary of the Provisional Government, Du Pont had signed the decree of deposition of Napoleon. See *Moniteur Universel*, April 3, 1814. He had good reason to fear the wrath of the Corsican and vented his dislike by using the Italian spelling of the latter's name.

have voluntarily assumed the yoke, and to have made, of an usurper, a legitimate despot. What can we hope from a mind without moral principle, and without that sound wisdom which acts morally, by mere calculation, on the common observation that honesty is the best policy. But come yourself & Correa, & let us talk this over together. We wish alike, but we are not equally sanguine in our prospects. And come soon, as your letter gives me to hope; and the more pressingly as within about eight weeks I am to commence an absence of two months from home. You are not unapprised by experience what you are to suffer from the *mauvaise cuisinerie* of our country. Mr Correa had promised me a long visit for this summer. His undertaking a course of lectures in Philadelphia had made me fear it would be retarded by that. But the more a man is master of his subject, the more briefly and densely he is able to present it to others. We shall have subjects too to grieve over. The desperate ignorance of our country in political economy, and it's limited views of science. But come both of you, and we will settle the affairs of both hemispheres, if not as they shall be, yet as they ought to be. I salute you, and him through you, with sincere affection & respect.

TH: JEFFERSON

ELEUTHERIAN MILL
NEAR WILMINGTON, DELAWARE
July 24, 1815

Thomas Jefferson
Late President of the United States

VERY DEAR AND RESPECTED FRIEND,

We were to leave tomorrow, my good friend Corréa and I, to see you at Monticello. Neither of us was able to get ready sooner.

But as we had to go to Washington and stop there a while, we feared that the slightest accident on the way would delay us and keep us from presenting ourselves at your door until after your departure, announced for August 6, or so near that date that we should bother you or upset your plans.

So we are postponing this trip, which will give us so much pleasure, until your return which we look forward to between October 6 and 10.

I have the keenest desire to see you, and I hope to every year, for I shall never leave America again.

Accept my most respectful greetings.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

MONTICELLO, *Xber* [*December*] 10, 1815

To Thomas Jefferson, Philosopher

MOST RESPECTED FRIEND,

I have just spent three days in your house, overwhelmed by the kindness of Mrs. Randolph and by

the pleasure of seeing your grown and lovely granddaughters as well as the wholly charming little one.[1]

Corréa says that I absolutely must leave, if I do not wish to be stopped by the rigors of winter, and so be compelled to impose on you for three months.

He left day before yesterday. I have stayed on two days longer, in the hope of seeing you come in any minute.[2]

I would have willingly braved the storms of winter. I have traveled in Poland in the snows. But my son, who left his business to accompany me, is compelled to return, and I am so ignorant of the English language, when I have to speak it or listen to it, that he is almost indispensable to me when I travel.

I have, however, determined, in order to learn something of this language (which a friend of America cannot do without here), to start the work which you asked me to translate into English — my work on education.

[1] It is impossible justly to apportion the blame for the unfortunate mishap which caused Du Pont to miss Jefferson at Monticello. The latter's explanation is given in his letter of December 31, 1815, below. Francis Walker Gilmer in a letter to William Wirt, January, 1816, said that Jefferson had "lately suffered the celebrated Du Pont de Nemours, a grave senator of France, near 80 years of age, to visit him at Monticello, stay a week and not see him." W. P. Trent, *English Culture in Virginia* (1889), pp. 41–42 note. Du Pont was entertained in Jefferson's absence by the latter's daughter Martha, wife of Thomas Mann Randolph.

[2] Jefferson endorsed this letter, "recd. Dec. 15," though whether or not at Monticello he does not say. He wrote Du Pont from there December 31.

I am leaving the first pages of this with you. You will tell me if I am to continue or abandon this enterprise. I do not forget that, if I persist in this work, you have promised me your excellent pen to correct my bad English before the work goes to press.

I am also leaving with you two other works, and I greatly desire that the most ambitious of these seem worthy of your attention and earn your approval.

The three united republics of New Granada, Cartagena, and Caraccas [1] have asked me for my ideas about the constitution on which they would like to settle, looking upon their present condition only as revolutionary and temporary.

I think that there can be twelve great Spanish republics in America, and that they ought to confederate as much with one another as with your *United* States. And I am trying to apply to them — as much as their local conditions will permit — the projects which my friends and I had formulated for the re-establishment of the French Republic, if we had been able — as we wished — to overthrow Buonaparte without receiving or accepting other kings.

The third work, of which I beg you to accept a copy,

[1] New Granada was the name generally given the districts comprised in the present states of Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, which revolted against Spain in 1811 and were united to form the Republic of Colombia in 1819. Venezuela was sometimes called Carácas from its chief city. Cartagena was a city of the present Colombia.

was made while crossing the ocean, and treats only of matters very well known to you as well as to the estimable writer for whom I have drawn them up. But you will find there (pages 36 to 44) a very long note which contains what I thought of Buonaparte, upon leaving France, with an addition on what I think today of his subsequent conduct and the misfortunes of my country. Alas, it will perish, and will drag down Europe in its fall.

Germany's fall, Italy's and England's will not be long in following ours.

If it should happen, however, that this is somewhat delayed, it is certain that England will make another bloody war on you, preparations for which she is not hiding. She will make this war as much through hatred as in order to have a pretext for preserving her standing army which she had no intention of reforming, and which is of great interest to her ministry because of positions which can be given and purchases which can be made.

If this war takes place, I desire my children, my grandchildren, and myself, in spite of my age, to be considered as faithful Americans and valiant republicans.

That is one of the reasons which make me urge you and beg you to exert all your influence with the President to have an appointment issued as midshipman for

one of the children of my elder son, who gives great promise.[1]

The Du Ponts, beginning with Pontius Comminius, who bore letters from Camillus to the Capitoline, and crossed the Tiber without a boat without knowing how to swim, have always been men of resolution and resource. I do not want them to be mere wealth of no value or an unfortunate acquisition for any country, much less yours.

My son and I would not have bothered you, did we not know that such applications are very numerous and that only those highly recommended can hope to succeed. We add a word on what may militate against my grandson, born in America long after his father was made a citizen of the United States, and consequently by no means a foreigner.

You know the warm and tender feeling that I have for you.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

WASHINGTON CITY, *Xber* [*December*] 20, 1815

To Mr. Jefferson

MOST RESPECTED FRIEND,

You will have understood, despite the marks of kind-

[1] See the following letter for the appointment. Samuel Francis du Pont (1803–1865), son of Victor and grandson of Pierre Samuel, became a distinguished naval officer and served conspicuously in the Mexican and Civil Wars. He attained the rank of rear-admiral. See article by Chas. O. Paullin, *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. v (in press).

ness with which your daughter overwhelmed me, how greatly I regretted missing you at Monticello.

If you have read the pamphlet for the Equinoctial Republics, I would be obliged to you if you would return it to me — directly if your franking privilege permits, or through the agency either of the President or the Minister of State, who will have it forwarded to me by virtue of their franking privilege.

I shall send you another copy which I am having made on the [illegible].

But I need to give that one to Don Pedro Gual who has been sent to the United States by the republics which have consulted me and which are united under the name of *New Granada.* It is possible that General Palacios has never received a single one of the two copies that I drew up for him; and the opportunity to send a third one through the personal medium of a civil agent of these republics is not to be lost.

I send my respects to Mrs. Randolph, to the other lovely ladies and young misses, and even to Miss Septimia,[1] whom I must also call in your strange and unreasonable English language "your great [*sic*] daughter," although she is *a very little girl* and even *one of the prettiest little girls created* by God.

I offer my tenderest and most affectionate greetings.

Du Pont (de Nemours)

[1] Septimia Anne Cary Randolph.

We leave Washington tomorrow. Corréa will be with us at Eleutherian Mill on the first of January. We shall drink to your health with as much veneration as attachment.

Xber 21. The President and the Secretary of the Navy have just appointed my grandson a midshipman, the position we wished for him.

It is needless, therefore, for you to use your kindness in that matter, but we still are none the less grateful.

MONTICELLO, *Dec.* 31. 15

M. Dupont de Nemours[1]

Nothing, my very dear and ancient friend, could have equaled the mortification I felt on my arrival at home, and receipt of the information that I had lost the happiness of your visit. The season had so far advanced, and the weather become so severe, that together with the information given me by Mr. Correa, so early as September, that your friends even then were dissuading the journey, I had set it down as certain it would be postponed to a milder season of the ensuing year. I had yielded, therefore, with the less reluctance to a detention in Bedford[2] by a slower progress of my workmen than had been counted on. I have never more desired any thing than a full and free conversa-

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Memorial ed.), XIV, 369–73.

[2] At Poplar Forest.

tion with you. I have not understood the transactions in France during the years 14 and 15. From the newspapers we cannot even conjecture the secret and real history: and I had looked for it to your visit. A pamphlet (*Le Conciliateur*) received from M. Jullien, had given me some idea of the obliquities & imbecilities of the Bourbons, during their first restoration. Some maneuvers of both parties I had learnt from La Fayette, and more recently from Gallatin. But the note you referred me to at page 360 of your letter to Say [1] has possessed me more intimately of the views, the conduct and consequences of the last apparition of Napoleon. Still much is wanting. I wish to know what were the intrigues which brought him back, and what those which finally crushed him? What parts were acted by A, B, C, D, &c. some of whom I know, & some I do not? How did the body of the nation stand affectioned, comparatively, between the fool and the tyrant? &c., &c., &c.

From the account my family gives me of your sound health, and of the vivacity & vigor of your mind, I will still hope we shall meet again, and that the fine temperature of our early summer, to wit of May and June, may suggest to you the salutary effects of exercise, and change of air and scene. *En attendant*, we will turn to other subjects.

[1] Probably referring to the note mentioned in Du Pont's letter of December 10, 1815.

That your opinion of the hostile intentions of Great Britain toward us is sound, I am satisfied, from her movements North and South of us, as well as from her temper. She feels the gloriole of her late *golden* achievements tarnished by our successes against her by sea and land; and will not be contented until she has wiped it off by triumphs over us also. I rely however on the Volcanic state of Europe to present other objects for her arms and her apprehensions; and am not without hope we shall be permitted to proceed peaceably in making children, and maturing and moulding our strength & resources. It is impossible that France should rest under her present oppressions and humiliations. She will rise in that gigantic strength which cannot be annihilated, and will fatten her fields with the blood of her enemies. I only wish she may exercise patience and forbearance until divisions among them may give her a choice of sides.

To the overwhelming power of England I see but two chances of limit. The first is her bankruptcy, which will deprive her of the *golden* instrument of all her successes. The other is that ascendancy which nature destines for us by immutable laws. But to hasten this last consummation, we too must exercise patience & forbearance. For 20. years to come we should consider peace as the *summum bonum* of our country. At the end of that period we shall be 20.

millions in number, and 40. in energy, when encountering the starved & rickety paupers and dwarfs of English workshops. By that time I hope your grandson will have become one of our High-admirals,[1] and bear distinguished part in retorting the wrongs of both his countries on the most implacable and cruel of their enemies.

In this hope, & because I love you, and all who are dear to you, I wrote to the President in the instant of reading your letter of the 7th on the subject of his adoption into our navy. I did it because I was gratified in doing it, while I knew it was unnecessary. The sincere respect and high estimation in which the President holds you, is such that there is no gratification, within the regular exercise of his functions, which he would withhold from you. Be assured then that, if within that compass, this business is safe.

Were you any other than whom you are, I should shrink from the task you have proposed to me, of undertaking to judge of the merit of your own translation of the excellent letter on education. After having done all which good sense & eloquence could do on the original, you must not ambition the double meed of English eloquence also. Did you ever know an instance of one who could write in a foreign language with the elegance of a native? Cicero wrote Commentaries of his

[1] See note on Du Pont's letter of December 10, 1815.

own Consulship in Greek. They perished unknown, while his native compositions have immortalized him with themselves. No, my dear friend; you must not risk the success of your letter on foreignisms of style which may weaken it's effect. Some native pen must give it to our countrymen in a native dress, faithful to its original. You will find such with the aid of our friend Correa, who knows every body, and will readily think of some one who has time and talent for this work. I have neither. Till noon I am daily engaged in a correspondence much too extensive and laborious for my age. From noon to dinner health, habit, and business require me to be on horseback; and render the society of my family & friends a necessary relaxation for the rest of the day. These occupations scarcely leave time for the papers of the day; and to renounce entirely the sciences and *belles-lettres* is impossible. Had not Mr. Gilmer just taken his place in the ranks of the bar, I think we could have engaged him in this work. But I am persuaded that Mr. Correa's intimacy with the persons of promise in our country will leave you without difficulty in laying this work of instruction open to our citizens at large.

I have not yet had time to read your Equinoctial republics, nor the letter of Say; because I am still engrossed by the letters which had accumulated during my absence. The latter I accept with thankfulness, and

will speedily read and return the former. God bless you, and maintain you in strength of body and mind, until your own wishes be to resign both.

TH: JEFFERSON

MONTICELLO *Jan.* 3. 16

M. Du Pont de Nemours

MY DEAR FRIEND

A mail left us this morning which carried my letter of Dec. 31. The messenger returning from the *post* office brings me yours of Dec. 20. requesting the immediate return of your letter to the equinoctial republics. I had just entered on the reading of it, & got to the 10th page: but on the receipt of your letter, as another mail goes out tomorrow morning, and no other under a week, I now inclose it, in the hope you will be able to lend me another copy which shall be safely and speedily returned to you. If Mr Correa be with you, be so good as to tell him that I wrote to him by the mail this morning, covering several letters to him, and not knowing whether he would be in Philadelphia I directed my letter to the care of Mr Vaughan, from whom he can have it brought in one day to the Eleutherian mills. The papers by this mail tell us thro' Fouche that the daughter of Louis XVI is aiming at the crown, the Salic law notwithstanding. The empty acclamations of the populace have turned her head,

which I suspect is modelled more in the form of the mother's than the reputed father's. Our family all join in affection to you, including even the little Septimia, who retains the recollection and name of the bons-bons & their giver. I salute you as ever with cordial affection & respect.

TH: JEFFERSON

ELEUTHERIAN, *March* 31, 1816

To Mr. Jefferson

MY EXCELLENT FRIEND,

I have the honor to return to you my small gospel for the use of the Spanish republics, which I had brought to you four months ago.

I have had, thank God, and I shall have several more copies to give; and I have only one secretary. Moreover, I have a great failing: pressed by age and circumstance, I am busy with several pieces of work at the same time. I know that this is not a good method — in fact, it is no method at all.

But in the storms of the world, life is not an occupation which one has time to regulate. It is a state of war and flood in which one must rush to the side on which the torrent, need, and the enemy occur.

This work on the republics which are in the borning, or about to be born or restored, is one of my writings for which I should most desire your vote and your blessing.

I should like to find a good writer to translate it into Spanish.

I did not think I ought to have it printed in French before handing in my resignation as privy councillor.[1] I have withheld this resignation because I have in Paris my wife, who has been wounded for sixteen months from a fall from which she will remain lame, as yet being unable to leave her room and almost her bed. My 13th chapter might bring persecution upon her head, or at least expose about a hundred boxes containing my life's work to the danger of being taken, as matter of safety, to the Minister of Police, who would have them cast in the fire or destroyed.

I should like for the poor woman to be able to send me one at a time the most important of these boxes, which I prefer to leave behind me in America rather than in Europe. Some day some one of my grandsons will benefit from them.

I am not sure of not returning to that sad Europe whose overthrow I consider complete and inevitable. With the assurance of work lacking and France having to pay, not only without but also the foreign bandits within, double that which she can, it is almost impossible for despair from within not to lead to attempts against the troops, the overthrow of the government,

[1] Du Pont was Councillor of State under the short-lived Restoration of 1814–1815.

the division of the country perhaps, general pillaging certainly, and the wasting of almost all the capital that remains. This disorder cannot take place in France without teaching to the lowest classes of the people of Prussia, of the small German kingdoms, and finally of Austria, who have been made to leave their useful labors for the *Landwehr*, worthy sister to conscription and even more cruel, that nothing can be refused to the crowd when it wishes to seize. It will seize — and the soldiers will set themselves at its head. The conflagration will reach Italy and even England, who in her madness has ruined her best customs. It is the only thing able to save you from war, for if the catastrophe is delayed more than two years, there is no doubt that the English will send seventy thousand men to accustom you to war, reunite you, liberate you — and make you pay very dearly for this useful "improvement."

There will also be a definite improvement in Europe, bought at a much greater price than it is really worth, bought at the price of half of its inhabitants, three-fourths of its wealth, and the scattering of the last fourth which will remain for several years practically useless for the re-establishment of its work. The new governments will not be monarchies. But you can judge what a dreadful thing it will be for a philosopher, not yet reduced to the utternost depths of despair, to

witness and quite likely be a victim of these tragedies as long as they last.

If I cannot avoid going, I shall perhaps perish in prison, perhaps be shot, perhaps be massacred in my home, and certainly be villified throughout Paris.

I am asking my wife to have herself carried on a couch by men to Le Havre, and once there lifted on to some vessel; get off at Philadelphia or New Castle as she had herself put aboard; and we shall have her brought here in the same manner as she will have traveled in France. But if she cannot physically (for morally her courage rises above all difficulties), I cannot write to her any longer: "Stay and die; I shall die by myself. And so we are separated forever." I must then return and console her a bit, help her, and die by her side. How could a person be so pretentious as to be good toward the world, if he does not begin with being *good, very good,* within his household? It is within that the real and positive *duty* is found. The rest is always contaminated by a touch of vanity.

Old age gives courage for death. Ask Solon.

The goodness of God, the intelligence of geniuses who approach him more than we, poor humans, can ever do, the esteem of those who in the animals of our species have more ties of heart and head with those superior beings, give courage *against slander.* You will never be persuaded that I pay much attention to titles above

which I have tried to set myself, or to money which I have always disdained and which would not be given to me, anyway; or that, even for glory, if it could be in these, would I do or say in any case anything contrary to my conscience which my illustrious friends, among whom you have a large place, have sufficiently enlightened.

I am adding to this package, on the question of your manufactures, a little note which I think it my duty to write,[1] because I am being quoted, as you were, against our own advice.

But it is another matter to administer Europe, where Colbert and the English, seduced by luxury, have curbed agriculture in order to have beggars, of whom workmen are being made at a low wage scale, and where the British Parliament has pushed this madness to the point of putting in danger the subsistence of a seventh of the population of its three kingdoms, instead of advancing the destinies of America (who is proceeding calmly with her imaginary capital, and that too with confidence, with reciprocal credit, and with paper); and these have become as powerful as if they were real, because the work effected by them has a cash value which, in the long run, pays for everything. Your agriculture, to extend even to California, has

[1] Perhaps the same as the "*Observations Sommaires sur l'utilité des Encouragemens à donner aux Manufactures Américaines,*" in the Francis Walker Gilmer Papers, University of Virginia.

need only of consumers within its reach, and these pay for the crops in useful services.

I present my respects to Mrs. Randolph and to all the beautiful young ladies, Miss Septimia included, as is fitting.

And I send you my warmest and most worshipful greetings.

DU PONT (DE NEMOURS)

POPLAR FOREST *Apr.* 24, 16

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

I recieved, my dear friend, your letter covering the Constitution for your Equinoctial republics, just as I was setting out for this place. I brought it with me, and have read it with great satisfaction. I suppose it well formed for those for whom it is intended, and the excellence of every government is it's adaptation to the state of those to be governed by it. For us it would not do. Distinguishing between the structure of the government and the moral principles on which you prescribe it's administration, with the latter we concur cordially, with the former we should not. We of the United States, you know, are constitutionally & conscientiously Democrats. We consider society as one of the natural wants with which man has been created; that he has been endowed with faculties and qualities to

[1] Printed in Jefferson's *Writings* (Ford ed.), x, 22–25.

effect it's satisfaction by concurrence of others having the same want; that when, by the exercise of these faculties, he has procured a state of society, it is one of his acquisitions which he has a right to regulate and controul, jointly indeed with all those who have concurred in the procurement, whom he cannot exclude from it's use or direction more than they him. We think experience has proved it safer, for the mass of individuals composing the society, to reserve to themselves personally the exercise of all rightful powers to which they are competent, and to delegate those to which they are not competent to deputies named, and removable for unfaithful conduct, by themselves immediately. Hence, with us, the people (by which is meant the mass of individuals composing the society) being competent to judge of the facts occurring in ordinary life, they have retained the functions of judges of facts, under the name of jurors; but being unqualified for the management of affairs requiring intelligence above the common level, yet competent judges of human character, they chuse for their management, representatives, some by themselves immediately, others by electors chosen by themselves. Thus our President is chosen by ourselves, directly in *practice*, for we vote for A. as elector only on the condition he will vote for B. our representatives by ourselves immediately, our Senate and judges of law through electors

chosen by ourselves. And we believe that this proximate choice and power of removal is the best security which experience has sanctioned for ensuring an honest conduct in the functionaries of society. Your three or four alembications have indeed a seducing appearance. We should conceive, *prima facie*, that the last extract would be the pure alcohol of the substance, three or four times rectified. But in proportion as they are more and more sublimated, they are also farther and farther removed from the controul of the society; and the human character, we believe, requires in general constant and immediate controul, to prevent it's being biassed from right by the seductions of self love. Your process produces therefore a structure of government from which the fundamental principle of ours is excluded. You first set down as zeros all individuals not having lands, which are the greater number in every society of long standing. Those holding lands are permitted to manage in person the small affairs of their commune or corporation, and to elect a deputy for the canton; in which election too every one's vote is to be an unit, a plurality, or a fraction, in proportion to his landed possessions. The assemblies of Cantons then elect for the districts; those of Districts for Circles; and those of circles for the National assemblies. Some of these highest councils too are in a considerable degree self-elected, the regency partially, the judiciary en-

tirely, and some are for life. Whenever therefore an *esprit de corps*, or of party, gets possession of them, which experience shews to be inevitable, there are no means of breaking it up; for they will never elect but those of their own spirit. Juries are allowed in criminal cases only. I acknoledge myself strong in affection to your own form. Yet both of us act and think from the same motive. We both consider the people as our children, & love them with parental affection. But you love them as infants whom you are afraid to trust without nurses; and I as adults whom I freely leave to self-government. And you are right in the case referred to you; my criticism being built on a state of society not under your contemplation. It is, in fact, like a critique on Homer by the laws of the Drama.

But when we come to the moral principles on which the government is to be administered, we come to what is proper for all conditions of society. I meet you there in all the benevolence & rectitude of your native character; and I love myself always most where I concur most with you. Liberty, truth, probity, honor, are declared to be the four cardinal principles of your society. I believe with you that morality, compassion, generosity, are innate elements of the human constitution; that there exists a right independent of force; that a right to property is founded in our natural wants, in the means with which we are endowed to

satisfy these wants, and the right to what we acquire by those means without violating the similar rights of other sensible beings; that no one has a right to obstruct another, exercising his faculties innocently for the relief of sensibilities made a part of his nature. That justice is the fundamental law of society; that the majority, oppressing an individual is guilty of a crime, abuses it's strength, and by acting on the law of the strongest breaks up the foundations of society; that action by the citizens in person, in affairs within their reach and competence, and in all others by representatives, chosen immediately, & removable by themselves, constitutes the essence of a republic; that all governments are more or less republican in proportion as this principle enters more or less into their composition; and that a government by representation is capable of extension over a greater surface of country than one of any other form. These, my friend, are the essentials in which you & I agree; however, in our zeal for their maintenance, we may be perplexed & divaricate, as to the structure of society most likely to secure them.

In the constitution of Spain as proposed by the late Cortes there was a principle entirely new to me, and not noticed in yours, that no person, born after that day, should ever acquire the rights of citizenship until he could read and write. It is impossible sufficiently to estimate the wisdom of this provision. Of all those

which have been thought of for securing fidelity in the administration of the government, constant ralliance to the principles of the constitution, and progressive amendments with the progressive advances of the human mind, or changes in human affairs, it is the most effectual. Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day. Altho' I do not, with some enthusiasts, believe that the human condition will ever advance to such a state of perfection as that there shall no longer be pain or vice in the world, yet I believe it susceptible of much improvement, and, most of all, in matters of government and religion; and that the diffusion of knoledge among the people is to be the instrument by which it is to be effected. The constitution of Cortes had defects enough; but when I saw in it this amendatory provision, I was satisfied all would come right in time, under it's salutary operation. No people have more need of a similar provision than those for whom you have felt so much interest. No mortal wishes them more success than I do. But if what I have heard of the ignorance & bigotry of the mass, be true, I doubt their capacity to understand and to support a free government; and fear that their emancipation from the foreign tryanny of Spain, will result in a military despotism at home. Palacios may be great; others may be great; but it is the multitude

which possess force; and wisdom must yield to that. For such a condition of society, the constitution you have devised is probably the best imaginable. It is certainly calculated to elicit the best talents; altho' perhaps not well guarded against the egoism of it's functionaries. But that egoism will be light in comparison with the pressure of a military despot, and his army of Janissaries. Like Solon, to the Athenians, you have given to your Columbians, not the best possible government, but the best they can bear. By the bye, I wish you had called them the Columbian republics, to distinguish them from our American republics. Theirs would be the most honorable name, and they best entitled to it; for Columbus discovered their continent, but never saw ours.

To them liberty and happiness; to you the meed of wisdom & goodness in teaching them how to attain them, with the affectionate respect and friendship of

TH: JEFFERSON

MONTICELLO, *Aug.* 3, 16

M. Dupont de Nemours [1]

DEAR SIR,

I have just received a letter from M. de la Fayette, inclosing me a copy of one to you from M. Tracy dated Jan. 30. He is, as you know the author of the Review of Montesquieu.[2] He sent it to me in the fall of 1809.

[1] Printed in Chinard's *Jefferson et les Idéologues*, pp. 159–61.

[2] See letter of November 29, 1813, above.

but it was not till the spring of 1810. that I could engage the translating and printing of it. Duane then undertook both; which he did not complete till July 1811. On the 10th of that month, he sent me a single copy, which I inclosed to La Fayette for Mr. Tracy the same day, that it might get into the hands of Mr. Warden, then on the point of sailing for France. I had subscribed for ten copies for myself, with a view of sending them to my friends in Europe. These came to me some time after. But our non-intercourse law first, and then the war rendering the transmission of them across the sea impracticable, I distributed them among my friends in the different states, that they might bring this excellent book into notice. Learning this last spring Mr. Gallatin's appointment to Paris, I ordered Mr. Dufief of Philadelphia to procure and inclose two copies to M. de La Fayette, which he accordingly did, and had them delivered to Mr. Gallatin. The French original is in my hands, and I have it much at heart that it should be printed: but my situation renders it difficult. Yours is more favorable, and if you can effect it, I will send it to you. It is due to the author and the world to give it in his own words.

The IVth volume on Political economy came to my hands in the spring of 1812.[1] The same editor undertook it's translation and publication. Two years were

[1] Published as *A Treatise on Political Economy* (Georgetown, D.C., 1817).

lost in enquiries and urgencies on my part, excuses and promises on his; until a letter of Aug. 11. 1814. declared to me that, altho' he had had it translated, it was not in his power to publish it. I then requested a return of the original. He claimed the price of the translation, which I immediately paid him; but did not recieve the work till July or August 1815. Three years being thus lost, I first proposed the printing it to Mr. Ritchie of Richmond. But he required so long a time for it's execution that I thought it better to accept the offer of Mr. Milligan of Georgetown to print it immediately, promising to revise the translation myself if he would. A very long visit to Bedford, a journey to the Peaks of Otter, and some geometrical operations in which I engaged to ascertain the height of these our highest mountains, with the business I found accumulated on my return in the winter; put it out of my power to begin the revision of the translation until January last. This is the only period of time delayed in my hands. I found the translation a very bad one indeed, done by one who understood neither French nor English: and I had proceeded too far before it became evident that I could have translated it myself in less time than the revisal cost me. I devoted to it five hours a day for between two and three months; and on the 6th of April only was able to send it to Mr. Milligan. Instead of printing it immediately however he now informed

me he could not begin it till the 4th of July. That day being past, and no proof sheet coming to me (for I have undertaken to supervise them) I wrote to him on the 21st of July to which I have yet no answer. . . .[1]

You will thus see, my dear friend, what scenes of mortification I have gone thro' with these printers. Mr. Tracy has the greatest reason to suppose inattention in me. In may last I wrote la Fayette (for I really had not the courage to write Mr. Tracy) some account of the causes of the delay of his work: but I did not go into particulars minutely, preferring an imperfect justification to the risk of giving uneasiness to Mr. Tracy by detailing the course of labor and vexation I had gone thro'. But I would have gone thro' ten times more to procure for the world the publication of this inestimable volume. I have done cheerfully, and will yet do what still remains, only regretting the apparent cause which Mr. Tracy has of dissatisfaction with me. If from these materials, you, who know our printers, their position and mine, can make up something more of a justification of me, without disquieting M. Tracy, you will render me a most acceptable service; for his merits as a great author and a good man make me set a very high value indeed on his esteem. But when I shall be able to get the translation out, I cannot tell. Milligan has already shaken my con-

[1] A paragraph, listing his letters to Ritchie and Milligan, is omitted.

fidence by his delays, and I know not where they are to end. I now wish I had given it to Ritchie, altho' the same delays perhaps might have taken place with him. I salute you affectionately,

TH: JEFFERSON

[*Aug.* 18. 1816.]

To Mr. Jefferson

MY MOST RESPECTED FRIEND,

It has seemed to me that I could not make better use of your letter concerning M. de Tracy than to send him a copy. This I did.

As to that part of his work which was not yet translated, which has not been well done by the person to whom Mr. Duane gave the work, and which you have either translated, or corrected, I am rather inclined to think that you should give it to Mr. Milligan to be printed, as he in collaboration with Mr. R. Chew-Weightman has made a superb edition of Malthus at Georgetown.

But I shall ask you if this new volume is a continuation of the *Commentary on the Spirit of the Laws* or a particular treatise on political economy, following sequelly the other work because of the analogy of subject matter.

If the first is the case, it would be better to have the two editions match.

But if the second is true, there is no reason for not making the edition of this work entirely peculiar to the author, more lovely still than his commentary on the work of another writer — however deserved the success both of the commentator and the original author may have been.

It appeared too that you had thought of putting out a French edition. If you still intend to do this, I will gladly take it upon myself to correct the proofs. That is all in which I could be of use. For you have seen how far from being useful in the matter of an English edition I am.

I shall remain a tolerable French writer. I shall never become a good English writer, and pressed by age to throw on paper whatever ideas I still may have on governments in general and those republics already born or to be born in particular, I can no longer give to the study of words the strength of which I have not any too much for the science of things. I am compelled to use the language in which I write with ease.

How I regret, my dear friend, that you did not have my work on education in your country translated sixteen years ago.

It would soon be in full maturity. We have lost ten years of public usefulness.

The classical books can no longer be made in Europe. They would be contaminated by the priests.

The government of the United States will be unwilling to pay for them. That of the republics of Spanish or Portugese America will still be for some years disturbed by wars in which the real people of the country take no interest or part. And after the victory of political freedom, the chains of Catholicism, of Christianity even (which has not been the religion of Jesus Christ since eighteen centuries) will be a weight on reason, ethics, philosophy, good sense, justice, and will hinder more or less religious liberty and will continue to villify *God* and *Men*.

Let us not be discouraged, let us not be downcast, my excellent friend. Let us work so long as nature leaves us strength.

As yet we can sow only acorns on land rather badly prepared. Oaks will grow under which, some centuries after us, men and animals will walk and propagate in safety, abundance, and delight.

I present my homage to your daughter and to her lovable daughters, *Septimia* included.

And I send you my most cordial and tenderest greetings.

Du Pont (de Nemours)[1]

I shall not leave America again. My wife will be here next May. I shall not have the happiness of knowing that my death would be useful to France. I must

[1] A marginal note is omitted.

endeavor that the rest of my life be useful to the United States and the world. *Utinam!* —

Is it not possible that the reciprocal cruelties between the Spaniards of Europe and the Creole Spaniards will give birth, among the real natives and the mixed bloods, to the idea of letting the white man weaken and exterminate himself, then of finishing them all off one night or morning, and keeping only the red men? 'Tis a sorry uniform, the skin!

Such a thought can grow in a timid people, long insulted and long oppressed by a foreign race.

There cannot be too much haste in granting full rights of citizenship to the men of red or mixed blood; or at least to such of them as are landowners or will become so. That is the best way of urging men to work, of inspiring public spirit, of keeping the interest of capital with the lowest possible tax, starting by favoring commerce and industry.

Our science of political economy advances and still requires much work.

That of finance is done but is not ripe; it is far from influencing public opinion.

It has not at all sprouted in your English race which still has the bad blood and the bad sense of its fathers.

My friend, we are snails and we have to climb the Cordilleras. *By* GOD, *they must be climbed!*

POPLAR FOREST NEAR LYNCHBURG. *Sep.* 9. 17

Mr. E. I. Dupont [1]

DEAR SIR

Your letter of the 11th of Aug. after a long detention at Monticello, is received at this place, where I have now been upwards of a month. I had seen in the publick papers the unwelcome event it announced, & also the obituary notice to which your letter refers. It was but a modest sketch of the worth of M. Dupont: for of no man who has lived could more good have been said with more truth. I had been happy in his friendship upwards of 30 years, for he was one of my early intimates in France. I had witnessed his steady virtue, and disinterested patriotism thro' all the varying scenes, regular and revolutionary, thro' which that unhappy country has been doomed to pass. In these, his object never varied, that of the general good. For this no man ever labored more zealously or honestly; of which he has left abundant monuments. Altho' at the age he had attained we were aware that his close could not be very distant, yet the moment of it's arrival could not fail to afflict us with those sentiments of regret which the loss of a beloved friend, a patriot, and an honest man, must ever excite. I sincerely condole with yourself and his family on the great void in their

[1] Printed in B. G. du Pont's ed., *National Education in the United States of America* (1923), pp. xix–xx.

society produced by his loss, of which they will be long & deeply sensible.

I duly received the pamphlet of M. Julien on education, to whom I had been indebted some years before for a valuable work on the same subject. Of this I expressed to him my high estimation in a letter of thanks which I trust he received. The present pamphlet is an additional proof of his useful assiduities on this interesting subject, which, if the condition of man is to be progressively ameliorated, as we fondly hope and believe, is to be the chief instrument in effecting it. I salute you with sentiments of great esteem and respect.

TH: JEFFERSON

INDEX

INDEX

Adams, John, President of the United States, and his commission, negotiates with the French, 9 *n.*; mentioned, 34 and *n.*
Alexandria, Va., Du Pont proposes to settle in, 27
American Philosophical Society, Du Pont chosen a member of, 15; Jefferson President of, 41 *n.*
Antimony, lack of, in U.S., bars progress in art of printing, 125
Arabia, and the Floridas, compared, 63
Armstrong, John J., and the ship *New Jersey*, 85; Du Pont's distrust of, 114
Aubenton, Louis J. M., 13
Austria, 120
Average nature, the, how it can be raised, 12

Banks, Sir Joseph, President of Royal Society, 42 *n.*
Barbé-Marbois, François, Marquis de, 43, 44
Barlow, Joel, 137
Barnave, Joseph, 161 *n.*
Behring, Mr., 79
Binney and Ronaldson (Phila.), 126
Boarding schools, limited scope of, 111
Bourbons, later, obliquities and imbecilities of, 171
Briot, M., 89
Bureau-Pusy, son-in-law of Du Pont's second wife. *See* Pusy
Burr, Aaron, Du Pont on, 92 and *n.*; Jefferson's account of the conspiracy, 94, 95; his partisans in Louisiana made up of fugitives from justice, etc., 95; mentioned, 116

Canada, necessary to safety of U.S., 104; should be seized if abandoned by England, but should be assisted in any movement for freedom, 119; acquisition of, defeated by treachery, says Jefferson, 148
Carácas (Venezuela), 166 *n.*
Cartagena, 166 and *n.*
Chew-Weightman, Mr., 191
Chinard, Gilbert. *Jefferson et les Idéologues*, 34 *n.*
Cicero, 162
"Citizens" and "inhabitants," difference between, 140
Civic religion, Du Pont's suggestion looking toward the development of, 118 *n.*
Claiborne, William C. C., Governor of Territory of Orleans, 89; Jefferson advises him to place Du Pont at the head of the university, 89
Colbert, Jean-Baptiste, 180
Coles, Mr., Jefferson's secretary, bears letter to Du Pont, 122
Colleges, limited scope of, 11
Colombia, 166 *n.*
Congress of 1801 (Seventh) Jefferson believes majority of, to be in sympathy with his message, and that the effect of its proceedings will be to consolidate well-

meaning citizens, whether federal or republican, 38
Conquests, Jefferson warned not to attempt, but by every act to show his wish to afford protection, freedom, and assistance, 120
Corny, Madame de, 46
Correa de Serra, Joseph F., Jefferson's appreciation of, 146 and *n.*; mentioned, 157, 162, 163, 164, 165, 170, 174, 175
Council of the Elders, upper chamber of legislature. Established by French Constitution of 1795, 2 and *n.*; Dupont's, service in, and why he resigned, 2 and *n.*
Crowninshield, Benjamin W., 170

Diplomacy, inhabitants of a republic less suited for, than those of nations which have courts, 109, 110
Drills, military, method of making them enjoyable by having them on Sundays and followed by dancing, 147
Duane, Mr., 188, 191
Dufief, Mr., 188
Du Pont de Nemours, Bessie G., translation of Pierre Samuel du Pont's *National Education*, 22 *n.*
Du Pont de Nemours, Eleuthère Irenée, his idea concerning the gunpowder he makes, 35; derivation of his name, 35 and *n.*; his father gives the perfected art of gunpowder to the U.S. through, 87; his father's anticipation of his success in the U.S. as a manufacturer, 28 and *n.*; began to construct his own works here in 1802, 28 *n.*, letter of Jefferson to, 195, 196; mentioned, 6 and *n.*, 51, 82, 85 *n.*, 93, 96, 165
Du Pont de Nemours, Pierre Samuel, his arrival in America, 3 and *n.*; Jefferson warns against speculators, 4 and *n.*; Jefferson's reception of, 4, 5; goes to Philadelphia to meet Jefferson, 5 and *n.*; his friendly feeling toward Jefferson, 5, 6; himself, his sons, and their wives, 6, 7; the qualities which led Jefferson to consult him about establishing the University of Virginia, 8; his idea as to branches of science and groups in which they should be classed, 8, 9; his need to be first of all a business man, 10; his views on national education, 10; his opinion as to the comparative importance of primary and elementary schools and colleges, 10, 11; difficulty in going back to our own childhood and seeking how our natures are formed, so as to make the new generation as enlightened as our average natures permit, 12; raising the average nature almost the only aim of his ambition, 12, 13; on the early education of *countrymen*, 13; starts to write Jefferson his views on founding a university, 14; chosen a member of the American Philosophical Society, 15; his work on national education finished, 16, 20; but not fully copied, 18; his feeling on the false report of Jefferson's death, 18, 20; his work on national education based on a national university at Washington, 22; which Jefferson disapproves,

22 *n.*; on Truxtun and the *Vengeance*, 22, 23; anxiety concerning the fate of his book, 24; on the difficulty of translating his letters, 24, 30; his wishes for Jefferson's success as President, 28; on Jefferson's only *Vice*, 30; on the number of college graduates who want to be lawyers, 32; on the conditions favorable to Jefferson in the election of 1800, and on the probability of his re-election, 32 ff.; favors facility of naturalization, 36; Jefferson applauds his purpose to remain in America, 41; urges Jefferson to secure for the U.S. Houdon's bust of Franklin, 43; urges Jefferson to deliver to Livingston personally the letter concerning Lafayette, 49; his entire sympathy with Jefferson enables him to understand his slightest word, 50; assures neutrality in case of war between U.S. and Great Britain, 50; as to purchase of Louisiana, 50; as to commercial freedom of Santa Domingo, 50; on the possibility of war between France and U.S., 52; his reply to Jefferson as to the Louisiana Purchase, 53–55; on the states of Mexico and Spain, 54, 61; disadvantages to the U.S., of conquest of Mexico, 55, 56; the argument for freedom of commerce, 56; the question of partiality between France and England, 56, 57; possible exchange of Canada for Louisiana and Floridas, 60, 61; possibility of a war of acquisition, 60; on the financial profit of the Louisiana Purchase from the standpoint of the U.S., 62; Du Pont's plan for justice to Lafayette, 65 ff.; site of proposed powder factory, 67; his suggestion as to the heads of an agreement between France and U.S. concerning New Orleans and the Floridas, 69, 70, and *n.*; suggests that he pay debts of the U.S. to certain Frenchmen, especially Lafayette, 71; his desire to be agreeable and useful to the U.S., 80, 81; his unpaid advances to France, 81 and *n.*; his gunpowder factory has no equal in the world, 82; land-titles in Kentucky, 83 and *n.*; thanks Jefferson for the protection afforded the factory, 85 and *n.*; condition of Europe leads him to determine to end his days in U.S., 86; his edition of Turgot's works, 86 and *n.*, 106, 111; suggests increasing the defences of the U.S., 91, 92, 97, 98, 99; on Jefferson's strong stand against British encroachments on American rights, 92 and *n.*; his opinion of England, 99; advises seizing Canada instantly in case of war, 99, and taking every opportunity to get possession of it amicably, 100; regrets Jefferson's refusal to run again, but approves his motive, 103; the U.S. not safe so long as Canada is not united to it, and means of defence are lacking, 104; essential training of young men, 105; urges Jefferson to use his spare time to see that what remains is done, 105; applauds Jefferson for the Embargo with

all its sacrifices, 110; regrets that he has not begun the public education of the nation, 110, 111; hoped to found a *Pontiania* when he came to America after the fall of the French republic, 112; what prevented him, 112; is in haste to return, but not sure of his reception here, 112, 113; his views as to the future relations of the U.S., 114 ff.; urges the necessity of acquiring the Floridas, 107; how to deal with Mexico, 107; warns against manufacturing as not necessary since commerce must be resumed some time and capital used for new industries will be thrown away, 109; reiterates his regret at Jefferson's retirement, 120; his treatise on the finances of the U.S., 127 and *n.*, 128, 129; takes charge of the *secours à domicile*, 131; his treatise acknowledged by Jefferson, with comments, 131; regrets lack of progress in public education in U.S., 135, 136; urges Jefferson to plan and outline textbooks for elementary schools, 136; urges Jefferson not to refuse an invitation to run for President in 1812, 136; further economical and financial recommendations to Jefferson, 138 ff.; his arrival in U.S. (1815), 154, 155; why he missed Jefferson at Monticello, 154, 165 *n.*; his outlook for the future, 156 ff.; his satisfaction in his family, 156, 157; on the prospect of an immense republic, 158 ff.; on the outlook for Germany, Italy, and England, 160, 161; and for Napoleon, 161; determines to learn English, 165; leaves with Jefferson his work on Education, and other works, 165, 166, 167; consulted by certain republics about their constitutions, 166; prophesies the early fall of France, Germany, Italy, and England, 167; asks Jefferson to obtain from Madison an appointment as midshipman for his grandson, 167, 168 (and *see* Du Pont de Nemours, Samuel Francis, Jr.); his work on the Spanish republics, 176, 177; why he withheld his resignation as privy councillor, 177; his danger of prosecution, 177; uncertain about his return to Europe, 177, 178; forbodes evil days for France, 178, and perhaps his own death, 179; Jefferson dissects and compares with U.S. his scheme for Spanish republics, 181 ff.; on Tracy's *Montesquieu*, printing, handling, etc., 191, 192; on his own powers as a writer, 192; his pessimistic views of his books, 192, 193; hopes that the rest of his life may be useful to the U.S., 194; a possible solution of difficulties between Spaniards of Europe and Creole Spaniards, 194; French science of political economy and finance, 194; the English run behindhand, 194; letter of Jefferson to E. I. Du Pont on his death and character, 195

Du Pont, Samuel Francis, Jr., son of Victor, appointed midshipman in U.S. navy, and attains rank of rear-admiral, 16 and *n.*, 173

Du Pont, Victor Marie, son of Pierre Samuel, came to U.S. in 1787, 3 *n.*, 4; appointed consul-general of France at New York, but refused exequatur by Pres. Adams, 3 *n.*; buys house and shop in Alexandria, in order to be naturalized in Virginia, 23; mentioned, 6 and *n.*, 29 and *n.*, 35, 51, 53, 67, 168 and *n.*
Du Pont, Madame P. S., her illness, 162, 177, 179 her disdain for titles and wealth, 179, 180; mentioned, 16, 18, 19, 29, 37, 77, 79, 113, 162, 177, 193
Du Ponts, characteristics of, 168
Duport, Adrien, 161 *n.*

Embargo, the, declared, 101, 102; advantage of, 121; why removed except as to France and England, 121
England, invasion of Holland by, forced Lafayette to return to Hamburg, 71; interest of, in connection with Louisiana Purchase, 57, 58, 59, 60; Du Pont advises that any treaty with, be well weighed and its conditions made binding, 99; Du Pont's view of government of, 99; vigorous attack can be made on, only by way of Canada, 99, 100; possible relations with U.S., 116, 117; embargo continued as to, 121; effect of indignation against, in U.S., has been to induce a tendency to manufacture and so to reduce the number of articles for which we depend on her, 124; Jefferson's judgment of, 155; Du Pont's view of outlook for, 100, 167; Jefferson agrees with Du Pont's opinion as to her hostile intentions against U.S., 172, 173; mentioned, 120
English, the, have curbed agriculture to make beggars, 180
Europe, no liberty to be hoped for in any part of, in a century or two after 1800, 35; war with, though not immediately threatening, should be prepared for, 108, 109; very changeable, 110; political activities of U.S. come too late, 110. And *see* Embargo

Fairs advised for major manœuvres, 117, 118; also holidays and festivals with a religious touch, 118
Federalists, and Republicans, no radical difference between, 39; some inflexible ones oppose Louisiana Purchase, 78; join with government as to the object to be gained against Great Britain, 94
Ferdinand VII of Spain, 115 *n.*
Finances of U.S., too bad to be possible to change, but sufficed for actual needs in time of peace, 62
Floridas, the, worth cultivating by the plough or for grain, but not for raising cattle, 62, 63; and Arabia, compared, 63; East and West, described by Jefferson, 75; Du Pont urges the necessity of acquiring to prevent closing of the Mississippi, 107; they belong to no European or maritime power, 107, 108; invasion of, to be feared, 116; should be defended at once if attacked, 119; and the War of 1812, 147
Force, should be resorted to with-

out hesitation, if necessary, even before preparation is complete, 118, 119
Fouché, Joseph, 175
France, is interested in having the commerce of the U.S. enjoy every right in New Orleans, 68; more so, if English were more favored than French in Santo Domingo, 68; cession of Louisiana by Spain to, 47, 48; importance of friendship with U.S., 47, 48; Du Pont's proposed heads of agreement between U.S. and, 69, 70; future relations of, with U.S., 114, 115; embargo continued as to, 121; Jefferson sees no end to despotism in, 162, 163; her early fall predicted, 167; will drag down Europe in her fall, 167; Du Pont's forebodings of evil in, 177
Franklin, Benjamin, 13, 34
French Revolution, not in question in considering course of U.S. as to Lafayette, 66

Gallatin, Albert, 35, 77, 79, 130, 171, 181
Germany, Du Pont's view of outlook of, 160, 167
Gilmer, Francis W., and Du Pont *National Education*, 26 *n.*; mentioned, 165 *n.*, 174
Great Britain, infringement of, on American rights in struggle against Napoleon, 92 and *n.* And *see* England
Gual, Don Pedro, 169
Gunpowder, Du Pont's gift of, to U.S., 87; Jefferson writes of a much larger supply of saltpetre than was looked for, 90

Hamilton, Alexander, his contracted English half-lettered idea, destroyed in the bud the hope of keeping the government going on true principles, 40; Jefferson on the ill consequences of his ideas, 53; mentioned, 34 and *n.*; the "Whiskey Rebellion," 128, 139
Holland, and England, strained relations between (1800), force Lafayette to leave, 7
Houdon, Jean Antoine, statue of Franklin, 43, 51, 67

Impressment, danger of revival of, 151, 152
Indians, Du Pont on relations of whites and, 31
"Inhabitants" and "citizens," 140
Institut de France, Jefferson chosen a member of, 4 and *n.*
Insurance, marine, question of, involved in Armstrong case, 85
Italy, Du Pont's view of outlook of, 160, 167

Jefferson, Thomas, Du Pont's warning against speculators, 4 and *n.*; consults Du Pont as to establishment of a university, 8, 9; his own ideas thereon, 9; *Notes on Virginia*, 10 and *n.*; false report of his death, 17 and *n.*, 18; keeps a record of temperature, 19 and *n.*; a negligent correspondent, 20 and *n.*; disapproves of a national university at Washington, 22 *n.*; his belated acknowledgment of Du Pont's book, 25; believes it impossible to translate, and determines to print in French, 26; on the election of 1800, 26; Du Pont on, as "acting the sublime Presi-

dent of the Universe," 28; Du Pont on his first message, 30 ff.; his only *Vice*, 30; hostility to the clergy, 32; relations with Priestley, 32 *n.*; probability of his re-election, 33, 34; sympathy of French liberals with, 34 *n.*; his policy of naturalization, lauded by Du Pont, 36; on difference between agricultural and urban inhabitants, 37, 38; believes the majority of Congress to be in sympathy with his message of 1801, 38; except for personal opposition between candidates, there would be no votes for federals within two years, 37; found the country in the enemy's hands, 39; removed only 90 for political reasons and 12 for delinquencies, 40; his criticism of Hamilton's ideas, 40, and of their consequences, 40; many unsuccessful experiments to be tried, 41; elected a member of the Philosophical Society and of the Institut de France, 42 *n.*; the only born American elected to the Institut during his life, 42 *n.*; Du Pont's reply to his letter relating to the Louisiana Purchase, 52 ff., 52 *n.*; Du Pont's letter to, carrying letter to Livingston on same subject, 54 ff.; on his friendship for Du Pont, 71; his reliance on his information and his views of the subject (Louisiana), and his good disposition, 73, 74, 75; description of the financial condition of the U.S., 74, 75; argues with Du Pont concerning the terms of the cession, 75, 76; asks that their correspondence be burned, 77; his policy as to method of dealing with Louisiana territory, 79; awarded a medal by the Society of Agriculture of the Department of the Seine, 82 and *n.*, 83; and the Du Pont powder factory, 85 *n.*; his medal from the Society delayed in transmission, 88 and *n.*; his reply to Du Pont's advice to add to defences, 93, 94 and *n.*; on the state of opinion in U.S. against England, 94; on Burr's conspiracy, 94, 95; his unwillingness to be reëlected, 96 and *n.*; Du Pont thinks his term as president more useful than writing the Declaration of Independence, 96, 97; writes Du Pont of preparations for attack, 102; applauded by Du Pont for the measures taken during the last months of his administration, 110; why had he not begun the public education of the nation? 112; Du Pont's letter concerning external relations at close of his administration, 114 ff.; sees no way to avoid being entangled in war of Europe (1809), 121; advantage of the embargo, 121; his relief in leaving the presidency, 122; his popularity much better than his letter suggests, 122 and *n.*; effect of the interruption of our commerce with England, 124; gives details as to what is being done in both cities and country, 125; acknowledges Du Pont's *Observations* on taxation, 131, and sends it to Madison and Gallatin, 132–34; in the new field of financial experiment in Spanish America, 134; on Turgot's works, 146; on

Turgot and Montesquieu, 145–50; on Correa de Serra, 146, 147; congratulates Du Pont on restoration of Louis XVIII, 151; his hopes for the future, 151; joins with Du Pont in his despair over France, 154; his judgment of England, 155; his explanation of his missing Du Pont's visit, 170; conduct and consequences of Napoleon's last apparition, 171; agrees with Du Pont as to England's hostile intentions toward the U.S., 172; advises Du Pont against translating his work on education into English, 173, 174; on Du Pont's work on the Spanish American republics, 181; distinguishes between his plan and that of the U.S., 181 ff.; "We of the United States, you know, are constitutionally and conscientiously Democrats," 181; in full agreement with him as to the moral principles on which the government is to be administered, 184, 185; on the proposed provision in the constitution of Spain, requiring ability to read and write, 185, 186; calls Du Pont's constitution for Colombian republics the best they can bear, 187; why he called them "Colombian," 187; letter of, to E. I. Du Pont on his father's death and character, 195

Joseph (Napoleon), King of Naples, 115 *n.*

Julien, M., his work on education, 196; mentioned, 171

Kentucky, land titles in, 83, *n.*, 1

Kosciuzko, Tadeus, letter to, sent by Jefferson to Du Pont, 46

Lafayette, Marie-Joseph, Marquis de, forced by English invasion of Holland to go to Hamburg, 7; Du Pont on, 27; writes congratulatory letter to Jefferson, 27 *n.*; Du Pont writes to Jefferson concerning financial relief to, 44, 45; grant of land in Louisiana to, 44 *n.*; defence of, by Du Pont, 65 ff.; Du Pont again urges payment of U.S. indebtedness to, 171; mentioned, 4, 15 *n.*, 43, 71, 187, 190

Lafayette, Madame de, 7

Lameth, Alexander, 161 *n.*

Lameth, Charles M. F., 161 *n.*

Lameth, Theodore, 161 *n.*

Lameths, the, profaned the French Revolution, 161

Landowners, and workers, status of, 140, 141, 142, 143

Lavoisier, Antoine Laurent, 28 and *n.*

Lear, Tobias, American consul general at Santo Domingo, ordered by Leclerc to leave the island, 64 and *n.*

Learned Societies, limited scope of, 11

Leclerc, Charles, husband of Pauline Bonaparte, at Santo Domingo, 64 and *n.*

Livingston, Robert R., letter of Jefferson to Du Pont, relating to Louisiana Purchase, 46–49; sent to France as joint commissioner with Monroe, 73 ff.; mentioned, 51, 61, 68

Logan, George, 1 and *n.*

Louis XVI, his daughter said to be

aiming at the crown notwithstanding the Salic law, 175; mentioned, 151
Louis XVIII, 151
Louisiana, Du Pont's argument as to purchase of, by U.S. — difficulties that may arise from Spain, Mexico, Great Britain, France — to say nothing of the cost, 62–69; price paid for all, 70 *n.*
Louisiana Purchase, letter of Jefferson to Du Pont relating to, 46–49; Du Pont speaks favorably of, 50; Du Pont's reply to Jefferson's letter, 55 ff.; James Monroe and Livingston sent to Paris to smooth out difficulties, 73 ff.; treaty with France as to, welcomed with acclamation in U.S., 78
L'Ouverture Toussaint, revolt of, and the Louisiana Purchase, 64 and *n.*

Madison, James, chosen by Jefferson as his successor, 102 and *n.*; would he follow Jefferson's plans for public education? 111; mentioned, 25, 37, 122, 130, 170
Maitland, Sir Thomas, 64 and *n*
Manufacturing not absolutely necessary for defence should not be undertaken, 109; commerce alone cannot be suspended, but some day it will resume its natural course, 109
Mexico, and Spain, 54, 55; relations of, with lands of U.S. in hands of Spain, if armed by revolution and civilized by Americans, might do incalculable harm, 55, 56; how to be dealt with, if it becomes an independent power, 108; the road to, through the U.S., 115 and *n.*
Milligan, Mr., 189, 190, 191
Mirabeau, Victor Riquetti, Comte de, 161 *n.*
Mississippi River, exclusion of, from proposed cession of Louisiana, not to be considered, 73, 74
Monroe, James, sent to France to negotiate concerning Louisiana, 73 ff.; has doubts as to value of Du Pont correspondence, 78 *n.*
Monticello, 19
Montreal, Du Pont disappointed in result of expedition against, 150
Moral and political sciences, probable attitude of enlightened men of Europe toward, 34, 35

Napoleon I, 161 (it happened this letter of M. Du Pont was written only a month before Waterloo); mentioned, 65, 151, 160
National Institute. *See* Institut de France
Naturalization, made easier by Act of 1802, 36 *n.*
New Granada, 166 and *n.*
New Orleans, will always be *de facto* capital of the two Louisianas, 62; effect in U.S. of right of deposit at, ceded to U.S. by treaty with Spain, 72
New York, elections in, in 1800, 14; attack by way of, considered, 100.

Octavius, Emperor, 162
Old men, possibilities in, 13

Palacios, General, 169, 186
Paris, negotiations between Pres. Adams's commissioners and the French at, 19 *n.*

Paterson, Mr., said to have promised to translate Du Pont's treaties, but never did, 138 and *n.*
Pennsylvania, vote of, in election of 1800, 26 and *n.*
Philadelphia *Aurora*, 17 *n.*
Philadelphia Gazette, 17 *n.*
Philosopher, a, and statesman must be a great writer, 36
Political economy, science of, should be known in U.S., 137, 138
Pontius Comminius, ancestor of the Du Ponts, 168
Priestley, Joseph, asked by Jefferson to propose a plan for a university, 8, 9
Priests, feeling between Jefferson and, 32 *n.* And *see* Royalists
Printing, progress in art of, 125; lack of antimony a serious drawback, 125, 126
Public education, Du Pont believes that it cannot begin too soon, 111; will Madison follow Jefferson's plan?, 111
Pusy, Bury de, 3, 4, 14, 15, 15 *n.*, 16, 18, 20, and *n.*, 25 and *n.*, 29, 100
Pusy, Maurice de, 135
Pusy, Madame de, 135
Pusy, Mademoiselle de, 135

Quebec, not considered worth its cost, 149
Quesnay, François, 13

Randolph, Mrs. Martha, Jefferson's daughter, entertains Du Pont at Monticello in Jefferson's absence, 164, 165; mentioned, 169, 181, 193
Randolph, Septimia, 169, 176, 193
Randolph, Thomas Mann, 1 *n.*, 165 *n.*
Real estate, belongs to those who can sell it, 143
Representative governments have nowhere reached the perfection of which they are capable, 158, 159
Republic, revolts in, how brought about, 143.
Republican party and the Federal judiciary, 31 and *n.*
Republican sentiment found everywhere except in those nations absolutely bereft of reason, 144
Republicans and federalists, 38, 39
Ritchie, Mr., 189, 191
Robespierre, Maximilien de, 151
Ronaldson, Mr., type-founder, goes to France to arrange for shipment of antimony to U.S. by way of England, 126
Royalists, all the people, federal and republicans, except the noisy band of royalists living chiefly in cities, and priests both of city and country, 39
Royalists and priests, opposition of, to Jefferson plans, immoveable, 38, 39

Santo Domingo, seizure of American property at, by French, 64 and *n.*, 65
Say, Jean-Baptiste, 152, 172
Schools, primary and elementary, all instruction in use in our daily life, all good sense, all virtue, etc., must begin with, 11; consequence of this state of things, 12
Short, Mr., 46
Silvestre, M., 88 *n.*
Skipwith, Fulwer, American com-

mercial agent at Paris, 83, 88, 89, 120
Smith, Adam, 152
Society of Agriculture of the Dept. of the Seine, Jefferson awarded medal by, 82 *n.*
Spain, and Mexico, 53, 54; negotiations between U.S. and, relating to Floridas, 62, 63, 68; treaties of U.S. with, 68; protests against right to transfer Louisiana, 78, 79; renewed spirit of hostility on her part, 89; wise provision in proposed constitution of, 185, 186
Spaniards, and European and Creole, possible solution of difficulties between, 194; mentioned, 120
Spanish American, new field of political experiment opening in, 134; the present morass of, 159

Talleyrand, Charles Maurice de Périgord and the X Y Z, 48 and *n.*, 49
Tannery, Du Pont wishes to perfect in U.S., 87
Taxes, Du Pont's dissertation on, errors relative to, 139 ff
Temperature, Jefferson's record of, 19 and *n.*; at Monticello, 21
Ticknor, George, 152 and *n.*, 153, 155
Tracy, Stutt de, his Commentaries on Montesquieu, attributed to De Pont, 145 and *n.*; letter to Du Pont from, 187, 188; difficulty about procuring, translating, finding and publishing of his Montesquieu, 188–192
Truxtun, Capt. Thomas, and his desire for a second engagement with the *Vengeance* after peace negotiations were in progress, 22
Turgot, Anne, R. J. de, du Pont's edition of his works, 86 and *n.*, 91, 106, 145, 146

United States, why Lafayette will not come to, 7; people of, tractable and indisposed to harass the government, 33; silent common sense silences the chatter of the merely clever, 33; everything in Jefferson's favor, 33, 34; Du Pont on ambition of, 54, 55; effect of conquest of Mexico by Spain on, 55, 56, Du Pont's arguments for and against the Louisiana Purchase, 54, 61; France wishes her to be a sea-power, England not, 58; which form of treaty does she prefer? 59; favorable intentions of France toward, in reference to New Orleans, 68; preference of Spain for France over England in Santo Domingo, wholly contrary to order of French government, 68; Du Pont's proposed heads of agreement between France and, 69, 70; various methods of attack in, considered, 100; disadvantages of, in certain respects, 109; less suited for diplomacy, 109; too far from Europe to have an accurate idea of it, 109, 110; its political activities come too late for Europe, 110; more hated in France than Spanish or Austrians, 114, 115; the danger from England, 115; political economy should be known in, 137, 158; England will certainly make another war on, 167
United States Navy, achievements of, in War of 1812, 149

Universities, limited scope of, 11
Urban inhabitants of the U.S., difference between and agricultural, 37, 38

Vengeance, La, and Truxtun, 22 and *n.*
Vergennes, Charles Gravier, Comte de, 17
Volney, Constantia, Comte de, 46
Voltaire, Arouet de, 13

War, Du Pont on cost of, 62
War, Du Pont insists on need of preparedness for defence, 117; drills made pleasurable, 117
War of 1812, inauspicious beginning of, 147
Warden, Mr., 188
Washington, Bushrod, 43 *n.*
Washington, George, 34
"Whiskey Rebellion," 34 and *n.*, 128 *n.*
Wilkinson, James, 148
Wirt, William, 165

X Y Z, 48 and *n.*, 49

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